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THE GIFT OF HIS CHILDREN

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE

AND

THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

NEW SERIES.....VOL. II.

For 1820.

"*Speaking the truth in love.*"—St. Paul.

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END OF VOLUME II.

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

NEW SERIES—No. 7.

For January and February, 1820.

ON THE CHARACTER OF WAKEFIELD'S TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

Upon taking up Wakefield's Translation of the New Testament, one naturally and reasonably expects to find, from the well known character of the author, much learning skilfully employed, much ingenuity boldly exercised, and some whimsicality occasionally indulged. The critical reader will not be disappointed in either of these expectations. He will find abundant proofs of uncommon acquisitions in useful learning, many instances of a happy exercise of ingenuity, and some blemishes arising from the precipitancy, and want of patient reflection, which were peculiarly characteristic of this eminent man. As we are to form our judgment, however, of the value of his work, not from individual examples of successful or of erroneous translation, but from the general principles by which he was guided, "non nævo aliquo aut crepundiis, sed corpore omni," I shall remark upon some of those decided faults and striking improvements, which are found to occur frequently, and which give a general character to his work.

1. The first peculiarity, which I shall mention, is a fault which, though productive of no very important consequences, is found in every part of his translation; viz. the caprice with which he has rendered, sometimes with the definite, and sometimes with the indefinite Article, words which have none in the Greek. His general practice is, to render words without the Article in Greek, with the indefinite English Article; but the plain meaning of the sacred writer has sometimes compelled him to deviate from it, and he has often translated otherwise

without any apparent reason. An instance occurs of the omission of the Article in Matt. iv. 3. ει υιος ει τυ Θευ, which Wakefield renders, "As thou art *a* son of God," notwithstanding the frequency with which Jesus is spoken of as the son of God in a high and peculiar sense, and notwithstanding also, that he has elsewhere rendered the same phrase more definitely, as Mark i. 1. "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *the* son of God," υιυ τυ Θευ. Luke i. 35. is rendered by Wakefield, "*A* holy spirit will come upon thee, and *a* power of the most high God will overshadow thee, and therefore thine offspring will be holy, and *a* son of God." Now as *a* holy spirit, and *a* power of the most high God can mean only the divine omnipotence, the expressions should be such as not to imply the existence of more than one almighty power; which can be effected only by using the English definite Article.—The translating of υιος Θευ in this instance by, *a* son of God, produces, as Middleton* has observed, a downright anti-climax. *A* son of God must be understood to mean, a holy man, and the angel is made to declare to Mary, "the power of the most high God will overshadow thee, and therefore thine offspring shall be called *a holy man*." It seems clear, that υιος Θεου must here be understood in the peculiar sense in which the title was given to our Saviour.

Upon the same principle by which he renders δυναμις ὑψιστου, *a* power of the most High, why should he not translate χειρ κυριου in the 66th verse of the same chapter, *a* hand of the Lord, and Χριστος κυριος in the 11th verse of the next, Christ *a* Lord? But in both these instances he has used *the*. The want of consistency in his rendering of the same phrase, under similar circumstances, leads one to suspect, that he had not bestowed sufficient attention upon the subject to ascertain the correct principles of the interpretation of the Greek Article, or to determine upon any uniform system. This irregularity is found in every part of his work; thus I open upon Romans, 1st chap. and I find in 1st verse, εις ευαγγελιον Θευ, translated, "for *the* Gospel of God; in verse 4th τυ ὁρισθεντος υιου Θευ, "proved to be *a* son of God," κατα πνευμα ἁγιωσυνης, "by *the* holy spirit," εξ αναστασεως νεκρων, "by *a* miraculous resurrection from the dead."—Here are four instances of the omission of the Article in the Greek, and Wakefield has alternately rendered by the English definite and indefinite, seemingly without authority or system. But it is needless to multiply examples of an inconsistency which is obvious to every scholar.

* Middleton on the Greek Article, Part II. p. 297.

2. Another peculiarity, which I think must be considered a fault, is the great weight which he ascribes to the authority of the ancient Eastern Versions. Of the Æthiopic, in particular, he seems to have had an extravagantly high opinion. He calls it in one place (note upon Acts xvi. 19.) "that most valuable of Versions;" in another (note upon Acts v. 3.) he says, "the Æthiopic translator has often preserved genuine words, corrupted in all our MSS." and again (on 2 Tim. iii. 16.) "The single testimony of the Æthiopic is with me, I own, equivalent to all the rest of the old versions in a difficult or disputed passage." He speaks of the Coptic also in terms of high commendation, calling it, "that most accurate version." (on Matt. xx. 16.) He says of the Syriac and Æthiopic, (on Acts xiii. 48.) that "they preserve more genuine readings, that seem to have been long supplanted, than any other."

But the best proof which can be given of the estimation in which he held them, will be found in the frequency with which he adopts their readings. The union of two or three of these versions rarely fails to prove decisive with him; and I have observed, that in thirty-seven instances, he follows the Æthiopic, entirely unsupported either by MSS. or other versions; and under similar circumstances he follows the Syriac in nine, the Arabic in five, and the Coptic in four instances; and very probably several have escaped my notice.

Now whatever may be the critical value of these versions, and they certainly stand very high, it is plain that *no single authority*, whether MS. or version, can be of sufficient importance to justify a translator in often adopting its readings unsupported. If the exigence of a passage be imperative for the reading of a valuable individual version, he might perhaps be allowed to follow it alone; but never to adopt its readings merely because he thinks them in some degree preferable. But this seems to have been frequently done by Wakefield.

It is easier to account for this undue appreciation of the Eastern versions, than entirely to justify it. We learn from a passage in his Memoirs,* that he had acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew, and its kindred languages the Syriac and Chaldee, of the Æthiopic, Arabic, Persic, and lastly, of the Coptic. He even made some improvements in the lexicon and grammar of the latter language. Of the versions of the New Testament in these several tongues, he made great and constant use when preparing his translation. He naturally set a high value upon a branch of knowledge which he possessed in a very superior

* Volume 1. p. 236.

degree, and he availed himself with great care and accuracy of those sources of information which were not equally accessible to others.* He has frequently corrected the erroneous quotations of Wetstein and Griesbach, sometimes with an amusing expression of contempt for their ignorance, or of abuse for their inaccuracy, and I have found not fewer than ninety instances, in which he has given a various reading, from some one or more of the Eastern versions, which Griesbach has omitted. This is certainly highly honorable to his fidelity and accuracy; and it may be said, in palliation of his offence, that many of the cases, in which he follows these valuable versions in preference to the majority of MSS., are instances of his omitting those apparent interpolations either from other parts of the New Testament, or from the invention of the transcriber, for the purpose of explaining the words of the sacred writer, which ought to be expunged, according to a sound canon of criticism laid down by Wetstein,† Griesbach,‡ and others.

3. A third peculiarity of his translation is his habit of rendering the imperfect tense in the participial form in English. Wakefield has perhaps adhered too strictly to this mode of translation, but it frequently expresses the particular time of performing an action with far greater precision than the common form. Thus Luke vii. 11., we read in the received version, "It came to pass the day after, that he *went* into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples *went* with him, and much people." After this completion of the action, we do not expect to hear of any thing that took place previous to his arrival in the city; but in the next verses we are told of his raising the young man to life, "as he *came nigh* to the gate of the city." Wakefield's translation is preferable: "On the next day, Jesus *was going* to a city called Nain, and a good many of his disciples and a great multitude *were going* with him." But it is not to be denied, that this rendering sometimes gives wrong impressions, thus Matt. ix. 24. "Jesus saith to them, (the company at the house of the Ruler of the synagogue,) Withdraw, for the girl is not dead, but asleep. And they were laughing at him." This implies that they were laughing at him before he spoke. He has in this instance adhered too closely to his system.

The imperfect tense is frequently used in Greek to express the continuance of action, which is entirely overlooked in the common translation, but which Wakefield has observed; thus Luke iv. 44. he renders, "he *continued preaching* in the

* See his Memoirs, vol. 1. p. 355. † Nov. Test. vol. 2. p. 862–3. reg. 9.
‡ Proleg. p. 60 recens. secund.

synagogues of Galilee." The grammatical accuracy, also, is worthy of observation, with which he has corrected many words and clauses which were erroneously translated in the common version. The most remarkable of these amendments is, his employing the auxiliary *will*, in the third person of the future tense, when prophecy merely is intended. It is surprising how often an erroneous use is made of the verb *shall* in the old translation. Take for an instance the prophecy in the 24th chap. of Matt. The third person of the future is rendered uniformly by *shall* instead of *will*, and the mistake occurs no less than forty-nine times in a chapter of fifty-one verses; which are all corrected by Wakefield. Of a similar kind is the erroneous use of the pronoun *which* for *who*, as Matt. ii. 20. "For they are dead, *which* sought the child's life." Examples of this occur on almost every page of the old translation, and are generally amended by Wakefield. These grammatical corrections are not absolutely peculiar to him, as many of them are found in Campbell's Gospels, and in the Improved Version. But he has surpassed them both in uniform attention to the proper rendering of these words.

4. A fourth peculiarity of Wakefield's Translation is the care which he has used to give the force of idiomatical expressions, not by translating the words literally, as is so frequently done in the Common Version, but by a more accurate rendering of the word or phrase, in appropriate English expressions. By translating an idiom literally, according to the usual meaning of each individual word, a wrong idea is sometimes given to the mere English reader, and at others, no idea at all. Thus the words αποκριθεις ειπεν are nothing more than an idiomatic pleonasm, and signify "he spake," or "addressed them;" but our translators, by always rendering these words, "answered and said," have sometimes implied, that part of a conversation was lost or omitted. This expression occurs in the account of the transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 3. 4. "Behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him. Then *answered* Peter and *said* unto Jesus," &c. and if we are not led astray by the inaccuracy, it is still an erroneous as well as inelegant translation. This and other similar instances Wakefield has rendered far better by the single word, "spake," or "said."

In Gal. i. 15. 16. we find the words, "when it pleased God ———— to reveal his son *in* me,"—an expression apparently very ill adapted to the communication of any idea. Wakefield, observing the Hebraism,* has expressed it, "was

* Vide Vorstium De Hebraismis N. T. p. 215—219.

pleased to reveal his son *by* me." Matt. xiii. 57. stands in the Common Version, "they were offended *in* him," εν αυτω being rendered verbally. Wakefield has very properly used the English idiom, "they were offended *at* him." Another Hebraism, which occurs frequently in the Common Version, is the use of a substantive for an adjective; thus Rom. vi. 6. το σωμα της ἁμαρτιας is rendered, "the body of sin;" but Wakefield has given the meaning of the original by translating the second substantive adjectively, "The sinful body." In Ep. James i. 18. λογῳ αληθειας means "true word," or "true doctrine," as Wakefield has it; but in the Common Version it is given verbatim, "the word of truth;" to which expression we are so habituated, that we do not at first perceive that it means nothing. Another idiomatic expression of the sacred writers, which is rendered verbally by the old translators, but more correctly by Wakefield, consists in the use of the verb δοκεω, *to think*, or *to seem*, when there is no intention to express doubt or suspicion. Thus Mark x. 42. "ye know that they which *are accounted* to rule over the Gentiles," meaning, as Wakefield has given it, "the *rulers* of the Gentiles." So, 1 Cor. xi. 16. "If any man *seem to be* contentious," for "If any one love contention," as Wakefield has accurately rendered it. The same form of expression occurs in several other places, as Matt. iii. 9. Luke xxii. 24. Gal. ii. 9. Heb. iv. 1. in all of which we find Wakefield's Translation the superior.

A fifth peculiarity in the phraseology of the New Testament, almost entirely disregarded by King James's translators, is the occasional use of the conjunction ινα to denote an *effect* instead of a *cause*. I cannot find that the word was used in this manner by any of the Classical writers; the best lexicographers do not mention it; and Hoogeveen* who speaks of this use of it, draws his examples from the New Testament, except one from Archimedes.† That it is so used by the sacred writers, I think cannot be doubted by any one who turns to John v. 20. where we read in the Received Version, "For the father loveth the son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, *that ye may marvel;*" ινα ὑμεις θαυμαζητε. It is certain that the astonishment of the Jews could not have been the *final cause*, or the *motive* to the performance of greater miracles, though it it would probably have been the *effect;* and Wakefield has, without doubt, given the true meaning by the words, "so as to make you wonder." In Gal. v. 17. occurs one of the few instances in which the old translators have deviated from their

* Doctrina Particularum. † And this not exactly in point.

usual practice in order to comply with the exigence of the passage, or the rules of grammar, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,—————— *so that* ye cannot do the things that ye would." All agree that ἵνα in this instance indicates the effect. In Luke xi. 50. we find the following remarkable passage; "that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation." Wakefield has given a very different meaning to this verse, rendering it thus, "*So that* the blood of all the prophets, that has been shed from the foundation of the world, *will be* required of this very race." Without stopping to inquire, whether this translation of γενεᾶ be correct, is it not obvious that he has greatly improved upon the Common Version, by rendering ἵνα in such a manner as not to imply, that the punishment of the Jews was the *motive* or *object* of the Divine Being in sending to them prophets and apostles? Instances of a similar use of ἵνα may be found in Luke ix. 45. Rom. iii. 19. 11. 31. and if these examples be sufficient to establish the principle, it may be applied to the explanation of the phrase ἵνα πληρωθῇ.

5. A fifth peculiarity of this translation is the happy ingenuity which is often discovered in arranging and connecting clauses. Wakefield has, by a judicious use of this expedient, frequently elucidated what was obscure, and shewn the connexion of what was before apparently loose and disjointed. Thus in 1 Cor. xi. 16, 17. we read in the Common Version, "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. [Now in this that I declare unto you,] I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse." The clause inclosed in brackets, in the 17th verse, appears altogether redundant and useless; and the word παραγγελλω is rendered in a manner entirely unprecedented in the New Testament. It occurs in twenty-nine other places, and in all of them requires to be rendered by *command*, or *charge*, and is accordingly so translated uniformly. But it is impossible to render it in that manner as it stands; and Wakefield has judiciously separated it from the verse with which it is now joined. He has also, on very respectable authority,* changed the form of the verb from the present participle, to the present tense indicative, and gives the verses thus. "If any one, however, love contention, neither we nor the church of God allow this custom. And such is my charge to you." i. e. respecting the wearing of veils, of which St.

* See Griesbach.

Paul had just been speaking: This converts an awkwardly redundant clause into a suitable expression of apostolical authority, is a more correct translation of the words, and forms a very proper conclusion to the subject on which the apostle had just been writing.

In Acts v. 12—15. and Rom. ii. 12—16. he has avoided long parentheses, and made what was obscure, perspicuous, by a very proper transposition of a clause in the one case, and a verse in the other. In 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4. occurs an instance, in which he has happily connected two verses, and judiciously altered the arrangement of clauses. Examples of this sort are very frequent throughout the work, but particularly numerous in the Epistles; and they are important, because they give distinctness and exactness to writings, which as they are read in the Common Version, are productive of many mistakes and much confusion.

Under this head, may be remarked the judgment with which he has divided the various books into paragraphs, according to the custom generally adopted by the later editors and translators of the New Testament. It is a custom which cannot be too much commended, and Wakefield has been peculiarly judicious in his divisions.

6. A sixth peculiarity of Wakefield's Translation, and an excellence of far greater importance than any that I have mentioned, is its freedom from a class of words, which have acquired a technical meaning, to which there is nothing corresponding in the language of the sacred writers. From seeing these words frequently employed in controversial theology, we have learned to associate with them the signification in which they are used by the sectarian, not that in which they were employed by the Apostles and Evangelists; and in order to arrive at a knowledge of the latter, it is obvious that we must throw off all these foreign associations, and carry ourselves back to the time when systems of divinity were calamities yet unknown. But how is he to throw off these shackles, and learn the apostolical sense of this class of words, whose whole idea of them is drawn from the "doubtful disputations," which have been so multiplied in the theological world? To the mere English reader, it is nearly impossible to disentangle them from that mass of associations, which has been accumulating for centuries; and the only means left to represent to him the simple meaning of Scripture, is to erase these words from his Bible, and supply their places with those which have not yet been made to convey unintelligible mysteries, or to stand as the expression of incommunicable ideas. This it is cer-

tainly not too much to say Wakefield has accomplished far better than most other English translators.

The most striking illustration of what I have remarked, is the word *grace*, which is almost uniformly used by our translators as corresponding to the Greek word χαρις. It is possible that it meant little or nothing different from that word at the period when our Common Version was made, but it has since acquired a peculiar theological and technical sense, to which χαρις certainly does not correspond. There is nothing in the Greek word which can imply that secret and mysterious divine influence, which is so generally conveyed by the word *grace* to the English reader. It is acknowledged by most scholars, that the word *favour* represents more accurately than any other the language affords, the exact meaning of χαρις, yet this is complained of* as not "an adequate substitute" for *grace*.—It is said to be "extremely languid; acting as a sedative to the fervour of a devout mind." Undoubtedly it is not an adequate substitute for the word *grace;* if it were, it should be rejected; but the true question is, whether it is "an adequate substitute" for χαρις, and if it be, no disgust at its languid character or sedative effect will deter the conscientious man from adopting it. Wakefield, whose scholarship and integrity are alike above detraction, has usually substituted it for *grace*, sometimes however rendering χαρις by *kindness*, or *gift*, but uniformly banishing a word which makes the Bible speak the language of a sect. In like manner he has preferred *deliverance* to *redemption*, *choice* to *election*, *chosen* to *elect*, and *reconciliation* to *atonement*.

With equal propriety he has adopted *master*, instead of *Lord*, as the translation of κυριε, when it is used as a term of address. The title, *Lord*, is so often applied to the Supreme Being, both in the Old and New Testament, that the union of something sacred and divine with our idea of the word is almost unavoidable; and it has undoubtedly had a great effect, as much perhaps as any single word in the Bible, in strengthening and confirming that opinion of the supreme divinity of our Saviour which is so common among Christians. We find his disciples using an appellation, which we ourselves should employ as a sign of the highest possible respect and reverence; and without the knowledge, or without the reflection, that the same word was then used as the common mode of address between equals, that it was nothing more than a term

* By Dr. Cogan in his Theological Disquisitions, Vol. 2, Note B. p. 502.

of decent civility, we easily fall into the persuasion that all who saw and listened to him, must have been impressed with the same reverential awe, with which we should address our Lord and master, were he again to appear upon earth. A moment's reflection will convince any one, that a most erroneous idea is thus deeply and firmly fixed in the mind of the unlettered man, by the perpetual recurrence of this single word. Campbell, for the most part, and the editors of the Improved Version uniformly, I believe, agree with Wakefield in this essential improvement.

7. The last superiority of Wakefield's Translation, which I shall mention, is one which pervades every page, and the proofs of which are innumerable, viz.: the accuracy and fidelity with which he has commonly given the true meaning of the original. It is this which gives it its peculiar value, and its superiority in this respect is undisputed and indisputable. Under a previous head, I have given some examples of the skill with which he has transfused the force of Greek or Hebrew idioms into vernacular expressions. There are many cases also in which our translators have failed to give any meaning, or have given a wrong one through apparent ignorance. Thus they have translated Gal. i. 10. in this remarkable manner; "Do I now *persuade* men or God?" servilely rendering πειθω by its common, as if it were its only signification, without thinking it necessary to find any rational meaning in the language of an apostle. Wakefield translates the verse, "Am I now seeking the approbation of men, or of God?" Rom. viii. 26. stands in the common version, "the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that *cannot be uttered*," with a similar disregard to all sense or meaning. The Improved Version has not much amended it by saying, "with groanings that cannot be *expressed*." Both have erred by rendering αλαλητοις too literally. Wakefield has avoided so gross an absurdity by rendering it "secret groans."

Striking instances of erroneous translation in the Common Version are, the habitual rendering of προσκυνεω by *worship*, of σκανδαλιζω by *offend*, of αιων by *world*, of προφητευω by *prophecy*, which Wakefield's better knowledge has corrected. Instances of this sort might be multiplied indefinitely, were it necessary; but I should shrink from the task of pointing out all the cases, in which he has improved upon all who have gone before him.

It may be observed of the faults of Wakefield, that they are obvious to every one. Erudition is not necessary to discover or to correct them, but they are as striking to the mere-

ly English reader, as to the acute critical scholar. Thus, no one can read of the impotent man, John v. 9. that "he took up his bed, and *was walking*," without perceiving the impropriety as well as awkwardness of the translation; and every one will observe that the expression, "of *a* living God," 1 Tim. iii. 15. is not more remarkable for its singularity than its incorrectness. One can scarcely fail to perceive also, upon looking over his notes, that he gives undue importance to the Eastern Versions, as few are so ignorant, as not to know, that there are other and superior means of settling the text of the New Testament. The case is unfortunately otherwise with his improvements; and while the attentive reader will be struck with his defects, and will observe his obvious faults, it is not equally probable that he will perceive, how often his Translation gives more accurately the meaning of the original, how often the force of Greek or Hebrew idioms is shown in English expressions, or how often a new connexion of a clause, or a new pointing of a verse, suggests a preferable meaning. The candid man, however, will not suffer himself to be prejudiced against a work, the faults of which, though more obvious, are not more decided, than its excellencies; while the former will be generally allowed to be of far less real importance than the latter, by those who can appreciate both.

It may be observed also, that his faults do not arise from theological prejudice. They have in fact no connexion with particular religious opinions. If it should be said, that his views of the character of our Saviour suggested to him that mode which he has adopted, of translating words without the article in Greek, with the indefinite English article, it may be replied, that it is of little consequence by what it was suggested, as it is certain that theological opinion was not his guide in translating even here; for while he renders υιος Θεου in one place, *a* son of God, he uses the *definite* article for the same phrase, in another. Theological prejudice is more consistent.

Should any one, however, while he acquits him of this charge, think him liable to that of having introduced unnecessary and capricious alterations from the received Version, it is to be constantly recollected, that our respect for the Bible, as the word of God, has extended itself to much in the Common Version, which is decidedly and confessedly wrong. Many an expression, which has become obscure from its antiquity, or which in the course of ages has lost its original signification, is regarded with an almost religious veneration; and any change is deprecated, as breaking up associations

which have been long established and habitually cherished. It is frequently the case, that we are at first disgusted by an alteration, even of words which we do not understand, or to which we can affix no definite meaning, and it requires reflection and examination to reconcile us to the necessary variation. With a knowledge of this feeling, which is so common, if it be not universal, among the readers of the Common Version, it will certainly be no more than just to avoid precipitancy in charging a man of learning and integrity with introducing changes unnecessarily and capriciously. Wakefield's fine scholarship will not be denied by any one; his remarkable freedom from theological prejudice must be acknowledged by those who can appreciate his high spirit of independence; while his exalted, firm, incorruptible integrity must be proved to all the world, by his noble sacrifices of interest to principle. These were some of the qualifications which he brought to the work of translation. To these are to be added, his strong and ardent ambition for literary eminence, his conscientious devotion of his labours and attainments to the sacred cause of theology, and his deep sense of the infinite importance of Christianity, and we shall find it difficult to select any one, in whom so many requisites and so many motives were combined, to produce a fair and accurate Translation of the New Testament.

If the result has corresponded with what might, on these grounds, be anticipated, as it has been my endeavour to shew, if the improvements in his Translation are numerous and important, and its defects comparatively trifling, and not the result of peculiar theological tenets; nothing can surely be wanting to prove that its more extended circulation would not only be useful to the theological student, but would essentially promote the cause of true Christianity, by disseminating a more correct knowledge of the meaning of the sacred writers.

EJACULATORY PRAYER.

"If prayer were not enjoined for the perfection, it would be permitted to the weakness, of our nature. We should be betrayed into it, even if we thought it sin; and pious ejaculations would escape from our lips, though we were obliged to preface them with the petition, 'God forgive me for praying!'"

Mrs. Barbauld's answer to Wakefield's pamphlet against publick worship, p. 14.

The precept of Paul to the Thessalonians, *pray without ceasing*, is peculiar; and unless we have right sentiments of the nature of prayer, may appear to be impracticable. For

who can always be repeating his prayers? Or how can we be always praying, without neglecting other duties to God,—and still more, our various and important obligations to those about us? But what is Prayer? Have you thought that the use of certain forms is essential to it? Have you deemed it necessary, in order to pray, that you should either join with others; or retire to some secret place, that you might open your heart to God? Have you supposed that prayer could be performed only at stated seasons, or when your heart was in a peculiar state of excitement? All these circumstances may be, and often are, highly favourable to devotion. But if we think them to be *necessary*, our views of the duty are too narrow. Prayer is far less the use of certain language, than the exercise of certain dispositions and affections; and the great design of the *expression* of prayer is, to strengthen the dispositions and affections in which it peculiarly consists. The design of *forms of prayer* is, to secure us against inconsistency and impropriety, either in the sentiments or the expressions of devotion. The purpose of *social worship* is, peculiarly, to unite our social with our pious affections, and by the same act to bind us at once more closely to each other, and to God. The object of *secret prayer* is, the free expression to God of what we could not freely express with, or before, one another. And *seasons of prayer* are prescribed, because the duty for which we have no allotted time, is easily deferred from hour to hour, and from day to day, till it is utterly forgotten. But if the dispositions and affections, in which prayer peculiarly consists, are felt to any considerable degree, it cannot be shut up within the limits of stated hours, and of particular and favourite places of devotion; it cannot always wait till others are ready to join in it; nor be restrained by the forms, from which, perhaps, it has derived the most important benefits. These dispositions and affections, where they have obtained ascendancy, will often burst asunder the bonds, by which our labours, or cares, or pleasures would confine them. They will rise to God under the pressure of circumstances and of events, which would bear them down to the earth; and in proportion as they are exercised and cherished, will produce the most important effects on our characters, our habits, and our happiness. These momentary, but sincere references and expressions to God, are an accomplishment of the precept, *pray without ceasing*. And not only may we thus pray without neglecting any other duty, but in this habitual devotion is the most uniform and powerful excitement to fidelity in every obligation.

Let me but refer to some of the circumstances, which exercise the dispositions and affections of a mind, in which devotion has thus become habitual; and to the mode of its operation.

But where shall I begin? In addressing those only who are christians, I should ask, what is the circumstance, the object, or the event, which has not raised your thoughts and your desires to God? How few are your waking hours, in which you do not, though only in a single expression, admire the wisdom, acknowledge the justice, rejoice in the bounty, implore the guidance, or ask the forgiveness of God? How easily do your thoughts, when not necessarily demanded by other objects, flow in a current of pious meditation, of holy desires and resolutions, of benevolent purposes, or of plans of personal improvement? How often do you ask, either for yourself or for others, the succours, the supports, or the encouragements of the gospel? And in your busiest hours of ordinary labour, and your highest enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, how often do you secretly say, *thou, God, seest me!—God preserve me!* or, *God, I thank thee!* But how many are there, who have never yet felt this heavenward tendency of a mind refined, and strengthened, and exalted by a faithful application of the principles of our religion! How many, who have not even a stated season for daily prayer! Open your eyes, I beseech you, and your hearts, to see and to feel, what God is doing, to elevate your thoughts and affections to himself; and let prayer become, not only your occasional refuge, when you cannot elsewhere find even a momentary security,—not only a formal offering, which is without incense,—but a perpetual sacrifice; an offering of the whole heart; a devotion of the understanding, the affections, the will, and the whole life to his service. This is the oblation on which the sacred fire will descend; and its sweet perfume will smell to the throne of heaven.

A mind and heart inclined to habitual devotion, like a mind and heart inclined to business or to pleasure, from the very influence of habit would feel the most painful state of want, if long detained from its favourite employment and gratification. A man devoted to business or to pleasure is quick to discern, and eager to seize, every circumstance, that may minister to his success. And a man, who loves communion with God, need not seek far nor long for objects, upon which to exercise his devout affections; nor will he fail of making the various circumstances which are adapted to his purpose, conducive to the great end of his life,—the closer union of his soul with God. Consider but for a moment, that God is the object of his supreme

affection; the service and favour of God his chosen pursuit; and the final enjoyment of God in heaven, at once the spring and end of his desires; and then look upon the world, and upon the circumstances of human life, and say, what is there, within or about him, which he may not make, and which will not be, subservient to his high and great design? Say if, in the daily exercises of his affections and dispositions, he does not fulfil the command, to pray without ceasing?

1. With the eye, and with the affections of such a man, look upon the world. What do you see? What, that is not the work of God? Indulge and cherish the sentiment, that he is in all, and over all; and what is the language of your heart? Does winter hold his triumphant reign, freezing the air, binding in its chains the springs and rivers, spreading wide its snows, staying the current of vegetable life, and compelling all that breathe to seek for shelter from its influence? 'Summer and winter, fire and hail, snow and vapours, and stormy winds, fulfil Thy word!' Or, do you see the animals at the stream quenching their thirst, or enjoying the abundant provision which is made for their support? 'They are thy care, O God, and their sustenance is from thy liberal hand.' Does the sun rise to enlighten, and to warm the earth,—to give a season for labour,—to gladden all that live by his cheerful influences, and to give a new spring to the vegetable creation? Do the clouds refresh the ground with their shade, and enrich it with their showers? Do the moon and stars give a glory to the night, even greater than we see in the bright light of day? Does the return of darkness bring with it a time of rest, not less necessary than food for ourselves, and for all the creatures about us? 'Thine, Father, are the darkness and the light, the sun and the stars, the clouds and the rain.' Yes, every drop in the vast ocean, every particle of this globe on which we live, every creature and every thing we behold, is God's; for he made them, and by him they are every moment preserved.—Do you see evidences of *wisdom* in the laws and courses of nature? 'Thine is the work, O infinitely wise and eternal mind!' Are you astonished at the displays of *power* which you behold? 'Thy power, O God, like thy wisdom, is infinite.' Do you every where behold *a parental providence?* 'It is thy goodness, O my Father; and I will bless thee for thy bounty to them that cannot thank thee!'—Thus does every thing around us, the great and the minute, the wild and the cultivated, the delightful and the terrific, preach to us of God, and touch a string in the pious heart, which vibrates devotion. God is so associated with all these objects in the mind of a pious man, that where-

ever he may be, and whatever his employment, the sight of them recalls the thought of God; and with the thought, a correspondent emotion and affection. This emotion and this affection is a prayer; and to him who sees the heart, far more acceptable, than the most pompous and costly offering, in which any desire or feeling is withholden from the authority of his law.

And, 2dly, with a heart disposed to love, to fear, to trust, and to serve God, observe the objects in which he is more immediately blessing yourself, and those with whom he has connected you, and consider the ordinary circumstances of every day; and say if they are not suited, in such a heart, to excite those frequent, secret ejaculations, which at once illustrate the nature of prayer, and shew the practicability of making it habitual.

What are these objects and circumstances? You are looking upon a field. Whose is it? Your neighbour's? Thank God that he has it. Or is it your own? Thank God who has given it to you. Do you see the growing corn, or are you gathering the ripened harvest, which is to give you bread, or to support the families of others? Thank him who produced, and who alone could mature it. Have you a comfortable habitation? When you enter it, and when you think of it, acknowledge him from whose goodness you received it. Do you reflect with pleasure on your abundance? Raise your heart to the bounteous giver. Have you and your family health? Rejoice in it as the gift of God. Do you retain the soundness of your faculties? What gratitude do you owe for their preservation! Are you indulged with the intercourse of friendship and love? Thank him who gave you friends, and enables you to enjoy them. Do you look with mingled delight and solicitude upon your children? Acknowledge the goodness of God; and look up for his guidance and blessing, that you may be enabled to rear them to his glory. Can you pursue your daily labours? Thank the God of your strength. Are you feeble, or suffering under any disease? Be strong in faith, and endure as seeing him who is invisible. Have you escaped any danger? Bless your Preserver. Has any one whom you love been rescued from peril? Acknowledge the hand that saved him. Are you able to minister to the necessities of another? Praise him who has given you the means, and the disposition. Do you see the deaf, the blind, the lame, the diseased, and think with joy that you are in health, and can see, and hear, and move where you will, without pain? Let your joy be that of gratitude; and with your sympathies for those who suffer, let your

thanksgivings for yourself ascend to heaven. Do you enjoy rest after fatigue? Consider who refreshes you, and renews your strength. Have your hours passed in tranquil pleasure? Think how they might have passed, and thank God for this season of serenity and peace. Are you angry with another? Say to God, 'Forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive others.' Are you oppressed with the cares of your family, or of your business? Remember that you are to give account to God, and ask if they are ordered according to his will. Are you tempted to indulge any bad passion, or vicious appetite? Feel that the eye of God is upon you, and seek for his succour and deliverance. Are you doubting concerning any dispositions or conduct? Seek of God for grace to judge yourself, as you will be judged. Have you done to another as you would not that he should have done to you? Look up to God while you are considering how you may make amends for the injury. Are you sensible of having wasted your time, or abused any talent; of having spoken rashly, or acted unkindly? Ask God to guard you in future temptations. Are you suffering any affliction? Look up for consolation. Would you read the scriptures? Reflect that they are from God, and contain the words of eternal life. Do you remember what you have read? Ask for grace to practice it. Do you feel a good disposition? Request of God to strengthen it. Have you overcome a temptation? Thank him who made you victorious. Do you desire to subdue any evil propensity, or to feel more strongly the influence of any principle of piety or virtue? Seek the assistance promised to those who ask for it. Have you been overcome by any appetite or passion? with your resolution of amendment, say, 'May God prosper me!'—What, in fine, is the object, and what the circumstance, which may not, and will not exercise the devotion of a heart, sincerely and strongly inclined to piety? In moments of fear and of security, of anticipation and of the accomplishment of desire, of joy and of sorrow, of adversity and prosperity, of sickness and of health, of solitude and of social pleasure, of business and of relaxation, the thoughts and affections may in a moment ascend to God, and in a moment may offer a prayer. By thus habitually looking to God,—acknowledging him in all circumstances and events,—committing ourselves to him, and seeking his approbation in all our dispositions, and indulgencies, and pursuits, we are, as far as possible, to make every action an act of devotion.

This *habit* of ejaculatory prayer is not obtained, till great progress is made in the christian life; for it cannot be maintained in sincerity, till God has become the first object in our

affections, and it is the first desire of our hearts to live in obedience to his commands. But let the disposition to it be indulged, and circumstances not to be enumerated will occur every day, and perhaps every hour, to exercise and to confirm it; to bear on the soul towards perfection, and to advance its preparation for the nearer vision, and eternal enjoyment of God.

Every good man has stated seasons for prayer. But the stated prayers of a good man are neither feeble, nor momentary in their influence. He retires from them, remembering the sentiments he has expressed to God; the acknowledgments he has made to him; the petitions he has offered, and the engagements into which he has entered. And can he carry this remembrance into his thoughts and plans, his social intercourse, his business and pleasures, without frequently indulging ejaculatory sentiments, acknowledgments, and petitions? Will they not be the natural,—I may say, the irresistible—language of his heart? As well may the man love his friend, and not think of him; or be with him, and not speak to him; as the good man may love God, and feel his presence, and not address his thoughts to him. As well may a man of the world forget his possessions, and his favourite gratifications, as a pious man that treasure and happiness, which he hopes for, and believes he shall obtain, in heaven. And can he think of this treasure, and cherish these hopes, and feel no aspirations of his heart towards God, their infinitely bounteous author and giver? No; we do not pray sincerely, if we feel the spirit of prayer only while we are using its language. The prayers of a truly good man exalt his heart to the closest union with the holy Being whom he worships; and it is one great object of his prayers, that in all the circumstances and conduct of life, he may glorify God, by a temper, affections, will and conduct, conformed to his commands. Will he then go from this service to forget God; to admire his works, without remembering their Author; to enjoy without gratitude; to be tempted, without remembering him from whom he has sought for succour; to be tried, without thinking of him whom he has acknowledged as his support; to sin, and feel no shame or sorrow; and even seek his happiness in indulgencies, which a moment's reflection must convince him, would incur the displeasure of God? No. *Prayer is but a means for the advancement of religion and virtue in our dispositions, conversations, and lives; and if this be not its effect, it avails us nothing.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

Sir,—It has been advised—I believe by Doddridge—that every one should select for himself, every morning, a verse, or short sentence from the Bible, which he may carry in his thoughts through the day ; and apply for his self-government and religious improvement, in the various circumstances in which it may be employed, either for excitement, or restraint. To those who are accustomed to begin every day with reading a portion of the scriptures, it will be obvious, how very easy it must be to make this selection ; and it will demand but the thought of a moment to feel, if the text is judiciously chosen, actually retained in the memory, and applied with any fidelity, that this practice must greatly conduce to the formation and establishment of a christian temper, affections and habits. By faithfully persevering in this practice through a year, three hundred and sixty-five texts will have obtained, not only our distinct attention to their import, but our personal application. And as perpetual dropping wears away stones, it would seem that this must be a sure means of wearing away, at least in part, any prevailing evil dispositions and propensities within us. As the amount of piety and virtue in our lives is formed of the distinct acts of duty to God and to our fellow creatures, to which we are every day and every hour called by the circumstances in which the providence of God places us, this daily and direct application to our own hearts and conduct, of some distinct principle or duty of his word, must daily enrich us more with the treasures of true glory and virtue ; daily bring us to an increased preparation for the eternal service and enjoyment of God. It will indeed require vigilance and resolution, as well as prayer, to secure our fidelity, in this application to ourselves of the principles and duties of religion. But how imperious are our obligations to this watchfulness, and care, and perseverance, and prayer, when we consider that, by this word which God has given us, we shall each be judged in the last day !

I would call the attention of the readers of the Christian Disciple to this subject. It will require but a very short time, in the morning to select a text of scripture for the day. And I would propose, in making this selection,

1. That it should be *the first work of every morning.*

2. That the text be directly of a *practical kind.*

3. That it should be selected with a view to the establishment in the heart of some sentiment or principle, which we may think or know to be particularly important to *the exigencies of our own character.*

4. That in the secret prayer of the morning, before entering upon the business of the day, it should always be made an object of distinct petition to God, that the doctrine or duty so selected may be impressed on the memory, and faithfully applied for the regulation of thought and disposition, conversation and conduct. And

5. That every night, before going to rest, a few minutes at least be given to self-examination; and particularly to the inquiry, *what influence has been excited, and what effect produced, by the principle or rule selected for the day.*

From a book in which rules of life thus chosen were recorded every morning, I will extract the texts for every day of one month. These will serve for a specimen, and an example.

1. Matthew vi. 14, 15. If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

2. Matt. vii. 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged.

3. Matt. vii. 2. With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

4. Matt. vii. 3. Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

5. Matt. vii. 5. First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6. Matt. xxiii. 23. Hypocrites! ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin; and have omitted *the weightier matters of the law*, judgment, mercy and fidelity.

7. Luke xviii. 17. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

8. 1 Peter i. 13. Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end.

9. 1 Peter iii. 10. He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips, that they speak no guile.

10. Galatians v. 22, 23. The *fruit of the spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance. *Against such there is no law.*

11. Philippians ii. 3. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory.

12. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and *have not charity*, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

13. John xii. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

14. Luke xix. 13. Occupy till I come.

15. Mark x. 44. Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all.

16. Luke vi. 45. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good.

17. Prov. xxiv. 19. Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked.

18. Mark xiii. 33—37. Take ye heed, watch and pray; lest suddenly coming, he find you sleeping.

19. John xvii. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. So shall ye be my disciples.

20. Romans viii. 14. As many as be led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

21. Romans viii. 2. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

22. Luke xii. 21. So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

23. Prov. xvii. 22. A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.

24. Mark vii. 15. The things that come out of him, those are they that defile a man.

25. 1 John ii. 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.

26. John v. 41. I receive not honour from men.

27. 2 Cor. iv. 8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair.

28. Matt. xii. 50. Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

29. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.

30. John xvii. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

31. Matt. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

DESIGN OF THE SABBATH.

The institution of the Sabbath is the immediate appointment of God, and one of the most simple and efficacious me-

thods, that can be devised for the advancement of religious knowledge and virtue. We will take it for granted, that there is none among us, who would be willing to deny its utility or obligation; for regarding it merely as a civil institution, it is of inestimable importance in maintaining the peace and good order of society; and undoubtedly there are benefits, indirectly resulting from its observance, which could be ascertained and appreciated only by the sad contrast, that would be exhibited, were it but for a short time suspended.

In the first institution of the Sabbath, there seem to have been two great objects contemplated; a day of rest from labour, and a day of public acknowledgment of God. Under the first of these the Sabbath is uniformly represented in the scriptures; and it seems to enter essentially into its design. It is in commemoration of the Rest, which, in accommodation to our views, God is said to have taken after the work of creation, and in the command, which enjoins it, we are continually reminded of that grand truth of natural religion, that Jehovah is the creator of all. It holds up a lasting monument to the confusion of infidelity; it exposes the falsehood of the notion which speculative atheism would maintain, that all things are the product of necessity or chance; for through faith in the declarations of this divine command we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things, which are seen, were not made of things, which do appear.

As a day of rest the Sabbath should be welcomed, not only for the relief and tranquillity it bestows, but for the evidence, which such an institution gives us, of the tender care and benevolence of God. He foresaw, that as the consequence of transgression man would be condemned to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; he foresaw how incessantly ambition would toil for the distinctions of life, how avarice would extort the painful service, and the master oppress the weary slave and his dependant cattle. In merciful regard to the humblest of his creation, as well as to ourselves, was this rest appointed. And there is something sublime as well as cheering to the benevolent heart, in the repose, which the Sabbath implies. It is the repose of nature when the bustle of the world should cease; when man is called to suspend for a little time his eager pursuit of pleasure, of ambition, or gain; and the animal creation, who cannot share with him in its moral benefits, may partake at least of its tranquillity and comfort.

The idea of simple rest, however, is the very lowest, in which we can regard the Sabbath; and in this view we speak of it chiefly in reference to the animal creation. To man the

Sabbath is given for the worship of his God. He is called to rest from daily labour, that he may have leisure more immediately to acknowledge and adore his creator; to present his thanksgiving for mercies; to implore forgiveness for his sins; to examine his life and character; to reflect on his destiny and the grounds of his immortal hopes. It seems peculiarly designed for social and public devotion, when members of the same family, and of the same community, may unite in the mutual benefits of instruction and prayer. Without some established institution, like this, it would be impossible for the public forms of religion to be maintained. And the christian rejoices in this day, and venerates it as holy, when he regards it as consecrated to the public honour of his God; when he may unite with his fellow-immortals in the noblest services of devotion, and contemplate with them those truths, on which he reposes for his improvement and hope on earth, and for his joy in heaven.

Our purpose does not require, that we enter into the arguments, on which, as christians, we maintain the observance of the First instead of the Seventh day. The ground of the institution to the Jews was peculiarly their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt; and this is assigned in the same command which refers to the *rest* from the work of creation. But the christian, in his Sabbath commemorates a far more glorious event. He follows the first instead of the seventh day, because on this day his Saviour rose from the dead, and appeared as the Son of God with power, and by that resurrection has begotten him to an hope, full of immortality.

Still further, in addition to the strictly religious purposes of the Sabbath, the christian will delight in this day for the order and harmony, which it diffuses through families and communities, for the habits of decency and sobriety, so essential to religion, which it cherishes, especially for the kindly affections, and the friendly interest, which unite the worshippers of one God and Father, in prayers for the same mercies, and in participation of the same privileges. He blesses the Sabbath too as the opportunity of public instruction to the poor and ignorant, whose daily toil may deprive them of other means; and thence in the fellowship it produces as softening the distinctions of wealth and station, which are indeed indispensable to the civil community, but which christianity enjoins us to regard as important opportunities for the exercise of mutual sympathies and reciprocal virtues.

Nor can it be forgotten, that in this day of rest, the christian rejoices at the anticipation of his rest in Heaven. In its

quiet repose, in the exemption it brings from the cares and passions of the world, and especially in its sacred services, he traces the image, though faint, of that celestial state, to which his heart aspires; and he strives so to fulfil its duties, that they shall ripen his spirit for its pure and immortal joy.

From the nature and design of the Sabbath obviously result its obligation and duties. If it be enjoined as a day of rest, it follows of course, that we are to cease from daily labours; and though, from the nature of christianity, and the example and instructions of its author, the restraints imposed are not so rigid, as were those of the Jewish law, yet undoubtedly we are guilty of profaning this day, when we allow ourselves in any business or amusement, inconsistent with its sacred purposes. No prospects of unusual gain, no favourite projects, however important, no pursuits of mere relaxation or pleasure, no gratifications of curiosity, can be admitted as an apology for the violation of so express a command.

And if the day be consecrated to the public worship of God, then it follows that we are bound seriously and constantly to unite with our fellow christians in this most pleasing and important duty. We are not, in the language of the Apostle, to forget the assembling of ourselves together. We must not be deterred from the house of God by a threatening sky; or by such an excessively tender regard to our health, as we should never allow to interrupt our weekly employments; or by any fancied demands of hospitality or politeness. If there be any, who are disposed to dispense with this duty, under the pretence, that they have already attained, and can learn better for themselves than they can be taught at church, they will do well to remember, that their self-complacency is at least not the fairest evidence of their superior attainments; that the worship of God, the adoration of his glorious majesty, supplication for his mercies, thanksgiving for his benefits, are the great objects of our public assemblies; that in these the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant are alike interested to unite; that with regard to the public instructions of the temple, the most enlightened and improved christian needs frequently to be reminded of the duties he knows, and the necessity of fidelity to his own convictions and hopes; and though, as has been admirably observed by a fine writer, "such is the solemnity and dignity of the subjects of the gospel, that the preacher must perpetually lament, that he so far sinks beneath them, yet such also is their practical importance, that he can hardly speak of them seriously without offering something, that may be blest to the benefit of every well-disposed hearer.

It is not the profoundness of thought, the ingenuity of argument, or the fairest flowers of rhetoric, that best accomplish the ends of instruction; and they, who have made the noblest progress in christian knowledge and holiness, best appreciate those simple truths, in which the great and the humble, the learned and the ignorant are alike concerned, and which are able to make us wise to salvation, through faith that is in Christ.

With respect to the portion of the day, not occupied in the public service, it will be acknowledged, that the New Testament prescribes no particular directions. The circumstances of the christian church at its first establishment and the practice, which either from principle or expediency long continued among the primitive disciples, of honouring the seventh day, may sufficiently account for the want of more explicit commands. If, however, as some have supposed, we are to regard the Christian Sabbath as the substitute or successor of the Jewish, it would follow, that we are bound to rest from our worldly labours; or if, as seems to us a much less disputable ground, it is our duty to attend public worship, then it is equally our duty, and consistency requires it, to abstain from any pursuits during the leisure of the day, that may prevent or impair the benefit we might derive; efface the good impressions of our devotions; weaken the resolutions we may form, or chill the ardour of our holy affections. All our employments should correspond, at least they should not be incompatible, with the sacred duties and the right improvement of the day. "We are not to find our own pleasure, nor do our own works."

It will not be supposed, that we are contending for the rigid and austere observance of the Lord's Day, that was practised and enjoined by our Fathers. We regard the Sabbath as a day, not only of instruction and worship, but of sacred pleasure and most reviving hope. We regard it as favourable in the highest degree to our social and benevolent as well as to our devout affections; and that we are rendering an acceptable service to the God of Sabbaths, in exercising and cherishing a kindly intercourse with each other. But if there be an error in exclusive appropriation of the whole period to acts of worship and religious seclusion, it surely is not the error of the present time. The danger, we apprehend, is from the opposite extreme; and in our impatience of the severity of our fathers, we are perhaps yielding to indulgences, no less unfriendly to the true spirit and just demands of piety. Possibly, too, in the confidence we feel in the general order and sobriety of this portion of our country, in the general respect, which is undoubtedly

felt for the institutions of religion, we are not aware of the abuses, which may insensibly creep in; and as there is no state more dangerous to the individual, than that of self-complacency and imagined security; so among the members of a community, where much is fondly boasted of their good principles and steady habits, there may be found indulgences and disorders, which would not obtain a tolerance in older countries, and in cities more populous, and on the whole more corrupt.

We are well aware, that it is but an invidious task to point out prevailing abuses, more especially when they can plead in their support either the opinion or example of those, whom we justly regard with deference and esteem. Yet we hesitate not to say, that the too common interchange of visits of friendship or courtesy, during the intervals of worship, however sanctioned and with whatever kind intentions paid, is a violation of the sacredness of this day. We are not of course referring to such as are prompted by christian sympathy or benevolence; but to those of convenience, politeness, pleasure, or fashion. We object, that such visits are, or ought to be, an interruption to every well ordered family; that they lead to thoughts and conversation unfavourable to the improvement of the public service; that they are not in their nature, or as they are usually conducted, to be distinguished from some of our most worldly occupations; that if propriety or friendship demand them, they may be made with equal ease at other times; or in the choice of alternatives, who will deny, that these lesser duties—to give them their highest name—should be totally omitted, rather than interfere with the spirit of the ordinances of God?

We may be found as those, who beat the air and reason with the whirl-wind, for who has ever yet obtained a successful hearing against the solicitations of worldly ambition or gain? Still we must regard as totally incompatible with the order and improvement of the Sabbath, some of the habits to which time and example have given their currency in our cities. Can it require proof to any reflecting mind, that the resort to the public Exchange, the employments and conversation of the News-Room, the bustle around the Post-Office, and all the mingled feelings of curiosity, anxiety, pleasure or pain, attending the expectation or reception of news, must be injurious at least, if not fatal, to the religious improvement of the day. Is it urged, that nothing of all this can be dispensed with in the commercial world? We answer, that in the first and noblest commercial city of the world, much of all this *is* dispensed with: that

in London the Post-Office, as well as the Exchange, is closed; that no mail is opened, and none departs from the city on the Sunday; and we believe, that with all her vast population, the stranger would witness no such resort for news, &c. as is to be found in our comparatively little cities. Is it urged, that the affairs of life cannot proceed with the interruptions which a stricter observance of the day would demand? We answer, that he, who ordained the Sabbath, knew, better than we, all that is necessary for man; that he has enjoined nothing incompatible with the best promotion of human interests; that the order and improvement of society, still more, the instruction and preparation of our minds, require such a respite from the common employments of life; and that with the divine injunction to consecrate a portion of our time to his service, we are no more at liberty to bring that portion within our calculations of pleasure or business, than if it had been totally withdrawn, or placed irrevocably beyond our disposal. We do not complain, that the rest of midnight comes to interrupt our gains;—we welcome its repose. Do our immortal souls less require release from the business and temptations of a distracting and corrupting world? Is it urged, finally, that many, who thus pass the leisure of the Sabbath, are kept from worse employments? We cannot perceive the soundness of the reasoning, that would defend and perpetuate one acknowledged abuse through fear of the possibility of another. It is, we believe, to mere habit and perhaps to an inconsiderate liberality of interpretation as to the duties of the Sabbath, that the disorder we lament is chiefly to be ascribed; and we have too much deference for the principles and characters of a large proportion of those, who are found in these resorts, not to believe, that they would regard with pain, and scrupulously refuse the sanction of their example to what ever should *appear to them* inconsistent with the obligations of the day.

But we have remarked, that in our confidence of the general order and sobriety of the community, there is danger lest we insensibly admit abuses, which to a reflecting stranger would at once be glaring and offensive. And we feel it our duty here to refer to an abuse, which to our deep regret is still permitted among us, of the *publication of a Newspaper on Sunday mornings.* We had trusted, after the attention, which had been excited to the subject, that the reflexion and religious spirit of the community would have discouraged what we think can be regarded by every good citizen in no other light than as a gross violation of the sacredness of this day. With the question of private interest we can have no concern. It is totally

sunk in the consideration of the injurious influence upon society. We presume no one will urge its necessity. In this peaceful period of our country and of the world, what news can reach us to justify the indecorum of issuing and distributing a Newspaper on the Sabbath? Our citizens cannot need it for their gratification or employment; the reading of a public journal at such an hour can answer no better purpose than to prevent the reading of religious books, to distract the thoughts, perhaps to prevent attendance on church, or to carry us thither with the cares and passions, the tumults and the hopes of a distracting world. We have learnt, that this town stands alone in the responsibility of such an abuse; and that whatever may be urged as to the indispensable labour of the printing-offices, no Paper is *issued* or *distributed* during the Sabbath in any other of our cities. We have only fulfilled a duty inviting the attention of our readers to the subject; and it would be with deep regret, that we should find ourselves called to repeat a remonstrance against a disorder, so injurious to our religious character as a town, and so wounding to the most enlightened and serious portion of our community.

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR.

No. I.

Under this head we intend to give explanations of some of the texts which are adduced as strongest in support of the Trinitarian doctrine. We suppose no one will be unwilling to admit, that the prevailing tenour of scripture is in favour of the proper unity of God, and that, but for a comparatively inconsiderable number of texts, the theory of a trinity of persons would, before now, have been discarded.* As Unitarians, we of course believe, that the real sense of these passages is not inconsistent with Unitarian views, and we wish in shewing this to remove a stumbling-block. The plan which we propose to follow, until we see good reason for changing it, is to remark; 1. On some of the passages which are brought in support of the doctrine of a trinity of persons; 2. On some of those which are understood to prove the deity and distinct personality of the Holy Spirit; and 3. On some of those which are

* We do not say,—would *never have been received*; for we have no idea that it had its origin even in mistaken views of revelation; but in a source entirely distinct.

understood to shew the deity of Christ. We shall avail ourselves at will of the labours of others, and shall generally include our remarks under this head within a short compass, both to avoid being tedious, and that they may be the better remembered.

Two of the most noted texts which have been brought to shew a trinity of persons in the Godhead are, that of the three heavenly witnesses, and the form of baptism.

"There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." 1 John v. 7. These words are no part of the Bible. People in general are not aware of this fact; but there is not a clergyman in the nation, who is fit for his place, but knows it. By whom the verse was written we are ignorant; but it was not part of the original epistle, and was not written by St. John. No theological scholar who has the shadow of a reputation to lose, will now think, whatever be his theological views, of quoting it as authentic. "If it were worth while," says Griesbach, the trinitarian editor of the standard edition of the New Testament, "I could defend six hundred readings, the most worthless, and rejected by all, by testimonies and arguments equally numerous and strong, nay, far more so, than are those on which the advocates of the genuineness of this passage rely. Nor would the defenders of the genuine text have in those instances so many and weighty arguments to oppose to my vain attempt, as have been produced against the supporters of this verse." The Calvinistic editors of the Eclectic Review speak of it thus:

"Upon this we need not spend many words. It is found in NO Greek Manuscript ancient or recent, except one to which we shall presently advert;– in no ancient Version, being interpolated only in the later transcripts of the Vulgate. Not one of the *Greek* Fathers recognizes it, though many of them collect every species and shadow of argument, down to the most allegorical and shockingly ridiculous, in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity,—though they often cite the words immediately contiguous both before and after.—and though, with immense labour and art, they extract from the next words the very sense which this passage has in following times been adduced to furnish. Of the *Latin* Fathers, not one* has quoted it, till

* It has been attempted to be shown that Tertullian and Cyprian have cited the last clause of v. 7. Our readers may be satisfied, on this subject, by referring to Griesbach Nov. Test. vol ii. App. p. 13—15; or Porson's letters to Travis, 240—282; or Marsh's Michaelis, vol. iv. 421—424. See also, for a lamentable contrast, Travis's Letters, 3d ed. 82, 53, 75—128.

Eucherius of Lyons, in the middle of the fifth century; and in his works *there is much reason to believe that it has been interpolated.*

"Under these circumstances, we are unspeakably ashamed that any modern divines should have fought *pedibus et unguibus*, for the retention of a passage so indisputably spurious. We could adduce half a dozen or half a score passages of ample length, supported by *better* authority than this, but which are rejected in every printed edition and translation.

"*One* Greek Manuscript we have said contains the clause. This is the Dublin, or Montfortianus; a very recent MS. glaringly interpolated from the modern copies of the Vulgate, and distributed into the present division of chapters."

The way in which this verse was introduced into the place which it yet to our shame holds in our printed Bibles, was this. When the first edition of the New Testament was printed under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes, at Alcala, in Spain, this verse was inserted, either on the authority of some very modern Greek MS., or more probably on that of the Vulgate Latin, the authorized version of the Romish church; into which version, either by fraud, or by the carelessness of a transcriber in transferring a commentary from the margin into the text, it had found its way sometime after the eighth century. Erasmus, who published his first edition about the same time with that of Cardinal Ximenes, Trinitarian as he was, was too conscientious to adulterate the word of God, and did not introduce the supposititious verse in question. Such a clamour, however, was raised, that in his third edition, he printed it, "to remove," as he expressly says himself, "occasion of unfounded reproach." The fifth edition of Erasmus, in which the verse was retained, was the basis of that of Stephens. This, in its turn, was the basis of that of Beza, which was the standard of our common English version. Thus this famous blunder of a scrivener, or fraud of a priest, goes out into the world, edition after edition, with all the authority of holy writ. It belongs to nobody to take it from its place, and there it stands, and will stand, a most eloquent refuter of all our pretences to reverence for the word of God. It is something however, that with so universal a consent of theological scholars, its spuriousness is acknowledged. Whatever sense critics might give to it, it was really with the great body of readers the main support of the doctrine of the trinity; and with the exposure of its spuriousness, we doubt not, that doctrine has received its death blow. It may linger for a long time, but its fate is sealed.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in [or *into*] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. xxviii. 19.—The sound of these words in the ear seems something like the trinity, but we are at a loss to know how one would proceed to deduce the doctrine from them. There are different paraphrases of them, but with very slight variation of sense. That which, on the whole, we prefer, is this; baptizing them into the faith revealed by the Father, communicated through the Son, and confirmed by gifts of the Holy Ghost. To be *baptized into*, or *into the name of*, a person, is to become by the form of baptism the proselyte or pupil of what he teaches. The Christian faith may with equal propriety be said to be taught by God, by his messenger, and by the spirit of holiness which fixes its truths in men's minds. (Job xxxvi. 22. Mark vi. 34. 1 Cor. ii. 13.) And this without implying in the least that God's messenger and witness are beings equal in power and glory with himself. A person who would collect such a sense from the words would be no more discriminating, than the Athenians, who thought that Paul was claiming worship for two strange Gods, when he spoke of Jesus and the resurrection. (Acts xvii. 18.)

What then is the argument founded on this verse? There is nothing said of the Son or the Holy Ghost being God, or of their being with the Father three persons and one God, which is the doctrine they are brought to support. Is it argued from the three persons being named in *such close connexion*, that they are the same being? One might conclude otherwise, from their being *separately* named. But if the reasoning be good, then are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Old Testament, the same being,—then are the spirit, the water, and the blood, (1 John v. 8.) the same thing.

Does the stress of the argument lie here then, that we cannot be baptized into the name of any but a person in the Godhead? This will not do. Tertullian speaks of baptism into repentance, into the remission of sins; and the apostle (Rom. vi. 3.) of baptism into the death of Christ, and of the Israelites being baptized into Moses (1 Cor. x. 2.)—Can we *become disciples* then of none but a person in the Godhead? Moses (John ix. 28.) John, (Matt. ix. 14.) and the Pharisees, (Matt. xxii. 16.) had theirs.—Can we *believe* in none else? The Israelites (Exod. xiv. 31.) believed [in] the Lord and in his servant Moses.

If those who deduce the doctrine of the trinity from this text, do not draw their inference in some of the ways we have noticed, we acknowledge ourselves ignorant in what way they draw it.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE LATE *REV. JOHN E. ABBOT.*

THERE are some men whose characters belong to the public. They, whom providence has placed in a conspicuous station and who adorn that station with eminent virtues, may improve mankind by their example, and therefore their example belongs to mankind. Their history and character may do good, when they are no more, and should not be hidden. Although, therefore, we are no advocates for indiscriminate biography, and for laying open the private retirements of all good men, yet we conceive that there are cases of unquestionable propriety and even duty, when the example of those who have left us should be fully set forth, that men may see it, and be led to glorify our Father who is in heaven. There are few things which more affect, encourage, and animate the living, than to know how they endured and what they accomplished, who have gone before them in the path of glory.

We are unwilling, therefore, to suffer the late Rev. J. E. Abbot to sleep with his fathers, without endeavouring to perpetuate the remembrance of what he was, and exhibiting his character to the imitation of christians. To those who know him, no description or eulogium can adequately portray the image which remains upon their memories. There are traits which may be perceived and felt by the intimate observer, but which cannot be presented in language. We can attempt no more than to give the leading incidents of his short life, and so to display the beauty of his religious character, as to promote the cause of truth and piety.

JOHN EMERY ABBOT was born in Exeter, N. H., on the sixth of August, 1793. He seems to have been destined to the ministry from his very birth. His mother, whom he is said to have greatly resembled, and who lived but a few months after his birth, solemnly dedicated him to God before her death. The knowledge of this circumstance made an impression on his mind, and he seems never to have lost sight of his destination. His religious character commenced early; he probably never knew the time when he was destitute of religious impressions. The same amiableness of disposition and gentleness of demeanour marked his childhood, which characterized him when a man, and made him then, as he was always, an object of more than ordinary interest to those who knew him. "While in the Academy," says one of his schoolmates, "no one regarded him as capable of doing wrong—we looked on him as a purer being than others around him."

He completed his classical education at Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Me. and was graduated with reputation in 1810, at the early age of seventeen. His college life appears to have been of a piece with his whole existence, unassuming and exemplary. At times however, his diffidence and self-distrust oppressed him with the idea, that he should disappoint the wishes of his friends, and become a useless being. He has since told a friend, that so great at one period was his despondency, that he would willingly have exchanged all his future hopes and prospects for the certainty of a living as a schoolmaster in some remote village; the office of a clergyman, although from his earliest recollection the object of his most ardent desires, appearing to him a situation of too much dignity for him to aspire to.

After leaving college, he soon commenced his preparation for the holy work to which his heart was always devoted, and pursued his theological studies partly at the University in Cambridge, and partly under the direction of the Rev. Wm. E. Channing, in Boston.—This term of preparatory discipline he passed with great diligence and fidelity. Religious truth was dear to his mind, and he entered with interest into those inquiries which are necessary to ascertain and define it, and without which the mind of a theologian is unfurnished. But there was one part of the ministerial preparation to which he attached supreme importance, and to which consequently his principal attention was directed. He thought the *religious character* of infinitely greater moment than all other qualifications of talents or acquirements. He had an extraordinary reverence for the sacred office, and dreaded above all things a diminution of that personal interest in religion, which alone can fit one for it, or make him useful in it. He believed, that the knowledge of human nature and of the modes of addressing and moving the conscience, which might be gained from the habitual study and discipline of his own heart, would be far more important to himself and to his flock, than laborious researches into some subjects connected with theology, which might make him more learned, but would be in danger of making him cold. And therefore, upon the principle that the affections are worth every thing to a religious man, and especially to a minister, it was his favourite aim and object to keep them alive. His wish was to be a good and useful, and never to be a great man; to this single object he bent his fine powers, and girded himself, like his master, *to go about doing good.* There was no selfish ambition in any of his plans; they all centered in the supreme desire to become a good minister. How much he had this at

heart, and what his favourite views of the profession were, may be seen from the following extract of a letter, written just before he began to preach.

"How soon I shall be presented for approval, I know not exactly. As I draw nearer the close of my course, I feel a greater importance to be thrown into the little time which remains before its termination. And the more I reflect, the more solemn appears the office of a shepherd of the christian flock. To enlighten the ignorant with truth, to guide the wandering and the doubting, to give hope to the penitent, and consolation to the sorrowing, and to arouse the sleep of the sinner, is indeed a blessed, but a most responsible office; and it seems the more solemn when we think that it is committed to '*earthen vessels*'—who themselves are ignorant and wandering, surrounded with temptations, darkened by error, and polluted with sin. It is a most animating thought, that he, who promised to his apostles, 'Lo, I am ever with you,' forsakes not their feeble successors."

His sentiments and feelings in regard to his profession are yet more fully discovered in a letter written just after he began to preach. "By these active duties I hope to acquire a habit of more energy, and to gain something of practical wisdom, and to become a better member of society, and minister of the hopes and comforts of the gospel to the poor and sorrowing. My dear ———, what a holy and glorious profession has God permitted me to assume. I feel that it is a blessing for which I can never be grateful enough. Its duties seem to be those of the good spirits who are messengers of mercy and love to us; bearing consolation to the afflicted, and hope to the desponding, and warning to the wanderer, and animation and peace to the humble and penitent. I often feel that my earlier anticipations of the happiness of the profession are indeed surpassed."

With such views of the profession in which he was to labour, he entered upon its duties. With his talents, preparations, and earnestness, he could not fail to be acceptable, and he won many hearts and left deep impressions in the several places to which he was called to preach. There was no parade of oratory, no effort for effect, nothing done for display; but his simple, unaffected, and serious style of preaching, with the uncommon purity and solemnity of his devotional exercises, excited the best sort of interest, while his exemplariness as a man and devotedness to duty gave the promise of usefulness to the people with whom he should be united. When the pulpit of the North Church in Salem became vacant, by the

death of the venerable Dr. Barnard, the eyes of his people turned at once to Mr. Abbot as his successor. He preached to them, became acquainted with them, and was ordained as their minister on the 20th of April, 1815.

The trials of a clergyman's life are never small to a conscientious man, and in the place to which Mr. Abbot was called they were on some accounts peculiarly great. He succeeded an aged and experienced minister, who had gained the full confidence and affection of his flock by his intimacy and fidelity in parochial duties. Mr. Abbot's own inclinations and views of duty would lead him also to pay peculiar attention, and devote a large share of time, to this, the most trying and difficult part of ministerial labour. He had come to a large parish when not twenty-two years of age, with but little experience, and oppressed with a sense of responsibility. But he showed himself to be equal to the charge. "Young as he was," says one who knew him well, "he discovered at once the wisdom and prudence, which we should suppose could be the result of experience only." He secured to an uncommon degree the respect and attachment of his people, and his own love for his duties soon amounted, as he himself expressed it, almost to a passion. As far as was practicable he made himself personally known to every individual, interested himself as a friend in their welfare, was always by their side in perplexity and sorrow, and ready to make any sacrifices of personal ease for the sake of their good. At the same time he pursued his studies with diligence, and made especially the preparation of his sermons for the pulpit an object of chief attention. These were distinguished for the judgment with which the most impressive thoughts were selected and arranged, for great affectionateness and earnestness of address, and for a style of uniform neatness, purity, and beauty not often excelled. He wrote much besides them to assist himself in the course of his religious inquiries, but not with a view to publication, and engaged but little in studies not connected with his profession, though he was a good classical scholar, and always fond of elegant literature.

His frame was too feeble to support this various load of cares. He had never been robust; and the duties which he pursued with so much ardor, insensibly diverted his attention from the care of himself. In the spring of 1817, his health was evidently impaired; and a little cough, which seemed alarming to some of his friends, but too slight to attract his own attention, followed him through the summer. In October he took a little journey to the south, which injured instead of benefiting him. He felt it his duty, feeble as he was, to preach

in the Unitarian church at Philadelphia, and on his return the weather was cold and stormy; he took a severe cold which settled upon his lungs with a violent cough, and was accompanied with bleeding. Fearing lest he should become too weak to reach home, he pressed on with injudicious rapidity. On the day after his arrival in Salem, the first Sabbath in November, he preached to his people. The weather was tempestuous. His utterance was interrupted by a perpetual cough; and the service of the holy communion, which he administered for the last time, was a season of distress to his church, and full of the saddest forebodings. He was too ill to attend worship in the afternoon, and from that time appeared to be in a rapid decline. During the winter he was confined to his chamber, and principally to his bed; his weakness was extreme; his voice only a whisper; and he believed himself to be a dying man. But there was nothing in him of distress, agitation, or gloom; he was the same tranquil and cheerful man that he had been in health. His unwillingness to speak of himself, and his great aversion to talking much of what was passing within him, which was always a prominent trait in his modest character, prevented his conversing much, or to many persons, of his feelings and prospects. He knew that religion did not consist in being forward to tell the secrets of the soul. He did not conceal, however, from those friends who had a right to know his thoughts, that he thought his days were numbered; and to a friend, who often watched with him, he spake frequently without reserve; dwelt upon the thought of dying with perfect calmness; expressed with energy the satisfaction and peace which he derived from the views of religion he had imbibed and preached; and especially from those affectionate and confiding sentiments respecting the essential goodness of God, which had always laid at the foundation of his piety and hope.

On the approach of spring, appearances were more favourable, and he removed to Exeter. There he spent the summer with his parents, and his strength was so far restored, that he contemplated a return to his ministerial labours in the autumn. A letter, which he wrote in July to an intimate friend, presents a beautiful exemplification of his habitual piety. "I think," he says, "that I gain strength, and now cannot but rejoice in the hope, which for so long a time I felt it necessary to check as it rose, of being again permitted to minister the gospel to my beloved people. In this restoration I see the *direct* agency of Him, who first breathed into me the breath of life; the skill of man and the powers of medicine seemed all in vain; it was *his* air, the warmth of *his* sun, the bright and cheering pros-

pects of the earth which *his* goodness quickened and beautified, which thus far have dispelled the damps of disease, and enkindled the feeble and dying flame within me. I suppose that every person, when restored from sickness, flatters himself that the feelings of piety, which deliverance awakens, will not decay. God grant that mine may be as permanent and influential as they ought to be!"

In another letter he speaks thus of his attendance on public worship, which he was just able to renew. "I could not help my mind from wandering much away, and being filled with recollections of the past years of my own life; for I had not been present at the ordinance since that distressful day, when I last met our own church at the altar. I think there is no time when the heart more expands towards all present or distant, whom God has made dear to it, than when commemorating that greater friend, whose love was stronger than death."

But the approach of autumn proved these flattering expectations to be delusive. His cough, which had never left him, became again alarming, and it was thought expedient that he should spend the winter in a warmer climate. He acquiesced in the measure, but did not greatly desire it. "Life for its own sake," he said, "was scarcely worth preserving at such a price; but he was not his own; and he felt it to be a duty to use every means which presented a hope that he might be restored to his people." On the eighth of November he sailed for Havana, to spend the winter with a friend in that place. But all hope of benefit from this step was disappointed. His voyage was rough and fatiguing; and although, as he very gratefully acknowledges in his journal, every possible attention was paid to his accommodation and comfort, he yet suffered much. "Upon the whole," he writes after his arrival, "I have been disappointed in regard to the voyage. My cough is somewhat increased and my strength lessened." His residence upon the island was not more salutary. The kindest attentions of devoted friends were vain. It was soon found hazardous for him to remain within the walls of the city, and he quitted the hospitable dwelling of the old friend with whom he at first resided, for a lodging among strangers in the country. He felt that nothing had been gained, and he sometimes said so; but no complaint ever escaped his lips, no look of discontent overspread his countenance. And when it was mentioned as a subject of regret that he had quitted his country, he said, "By no means; that he considered it the peculiar appointment of Providence, and, whatever might be the event, he would not alter a single circumstance if he could."

A minute account of his residence in Cuba would be exceedingly interesting. There was not a day of his exile, says the friend who accompanied him, that he was not a subject for home and a nurse; yet his mind was tranquil and active as when in health. He commenced a journal when he left home, which he continued until increasing weakness compelled him to relinquish it thirteen days after his arrival. What he wrote is interesting from its minute descriptions of scenes and events, and as it shows that he was alive to all around him, and could observe and reflect as he always did. His remarks upon the character and influence of the Roman Catholic superstitions, concerning which he made full inquiry and observation; upon the state of morals; and upon the great evils which result from making the Sabbath a day of amusement; are truly creditable to his talents and piety, and almost wonderful, when it is considered that he was so feeble as to be utterly exhausted by the effort required to write a few pages. But he was one who never would suffer the opportunity of improving his mind or his heart to pass by. He formed an acquaintance with several Friars of distinction, with whom he used to converse by means of a pencil in Latin; one of whom, of superior rank and fortune, became greatly attached to him, and daily exchanged visits. Through him he was received with hospitality at the convent of which he was a member, obtained access to the library, with liberty to borrow books, and was requested to visit freely at all times. He visited the prison, the slave-market, and the burial place of Americans, where he attended the funeral of a young man, a fellow passenger, and other similar places of suffering. When the fatigue attendant on such exertions was named to him, he replied, that it was the duty of a clergyman to make himself familiar with such scenes, as they fitted him for the better discharge of his duty. So much had he at heart the one object of being a useful minister.

But the increasing heat of the weather soon rendered it impossible for him to take the necessary exercise, and his strength hourly decayed; when, in one of those sudden changes to which the climate is subject, but against which man has made insufficient provision, he took a severe cold which threatened a speedy termination to his sufferings. As soon as he was a little relieved, he embarked for Charleston, S. C. The sea breeze in some degree restored his appetite and strength; and when he arrived, the sensation, which every one feels on treading again his native shore, gave a stimulus to his exhausted frame, which he mistook for returning health. He immediately found kind and devoted friends, though he came to them a

stranger, and received every comfort which the most affectionate and tender sympathy could bestow. But he soon found that his feelings had deceived him, and his spirits sunk for a moment under the pressure of disease, and disappointed hope, and the delay in returning home, occasioned by the lateness of the New England spring. On it being remarked to him that he was in low spirits, he answered, "No; not in low spirits, but sober. I think it very doubtful whether I am ever any better, and it is time for me now to consider myself a stranger and pilgrim on earth." He would often say, "O that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest." He sometimes regretted the distraction of mind produced by travelling, and said there was great justice in the remark of Jeremy Taylor, that "no one can be devout who leads a wandering life." The thought of dying was evidently familiar to him. As he was riding one fine morning, he applied to himself the lines written by Michael Bruce, just before his death:—

> Now spring returns—but not to me returns
> The vernal joys my better years have known;
> Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,
> And all the joys of life with health are flown.

Yet in the midst of a weakness and langour which might have excused him for attending exclusively to himself, he engaged in teaching the slave, who waited upon him, to read.

When the weather became hot in the middle of April, he left Charleston and reached Philadelphia by packet on the 22d, so much reduced that it was thought doubtful whether he could live to reach home. His father and several friends met him there. Their presence produced a temporary exhilaration of spirits, but his strength was rapidly decreasing, and from that time he could speak only in a whisper.

He arrived in Exeter, at the abode of his parents, in June. During the summer his decline was certain but gradual. He had too long contemplated the event to be moved by it. His whole demeanor remained collected and tranquil. There was a quietness in his manner, a placid gentleness in every look and word which came from him, which discovered that death had no terrors to sadden or deject him, and that he had no duty now but to withdraw his interest from earthly things, and "prune his flight for heaven." The same desire to save others from pain, which had always been eminently characteristic of him, prevented him for a long time from speaking of his death to the friends who were with him, and made him reluc-

tant to convey even by any thing in his manner, that he thought himself so near his departure. But about a fortnight before his death, he communicated to his father his belief that all hope of recovery was passed; said, that he had long since relinquished hope; that he had wished to live that he might be useful to his parish, and that he might be instrumental in communicating religious instruction to his brother and sister; but he was convinced that for the wisest and best reasons this was not permitted, and he perfectly acquiesced. After this disclosure his mind seemed relieved. Every thing indicated composure of spirit and a quiet waiting to be gone. He was for the most part spared much pain, and the powers of his mind remained perfectly unimpaired. During the last week of his life he listened occasionally, in the little time in which his extreme exhaustion would suffer him to command his attention, to passages from the Bible and other pious books; and never omitted his habit of retiring to his devotions, till a few days before his death. Two days previous to that event, he made a memorandum in writing of several little things, which he wished should be given as remembrances to some of his friends; and renewed the request, which he had made on leaving the country, that a certain part of his library, containing his most valuable theological books, should be given to his church for the use of their future ministers.* In the night of October 6th his complaints increased, and his dissolution was evidently near. Toward morning he passed through a severe paroxysm of pain, and his breath afterward grew shorter. He called his brother to him, and bade him look upon him, and see what religion would do for man at the hour of death. When the time of his departure came, he was sensible of its arrival, and calmly said, "Mother, I am going to leave you." He kissed her, and said, "Where is my father." When his father came he gave him also a parting kiss, and then, looking up to heaven, pronounced in an audible, distinct voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." No other words were heard but the ejaculation, "Blessed Jesus—" He requested to remain quiet, and his eyes were still raised, as in prayer, when he gently ceased to breathe. Thus he died as he lived, in

* The following is a memorandum which he made when he sailed for Havana:

"I wish to leave all those books, which are marked in the catalogue which I handed you, to the North Society, for the use of their pastor for the time being. In this way I hope that when I shall speak to my beloved people no more, I may still, in a remote manner, be doing good to them and to their children."

every thing consistent, in every thing beautiful. He was indeed ripened for a better world. His career was short, but few men will live to do more for religion. One such example of the power of Christianity to purify and exalt the character, and to throw a heavenly lustre over the bed of death, is worth many longer lives of ministerial usefulness.

I have been thus minute in the details of Mr. Abbot's life, because it appeared to me that his character could be fairly drawn only by thus making it speak for itself. A formal description of it would convey but a general and faint idea of what he was, and be quite insufficient in liveliness and truth. His was strictly, and without mixture, a religious character. There appeared in him a peculiar maturity of those graces, which distinguish the *Christian* from all other morality. He might well be called, in that expressive phrase which Dr. Buchanan has recorded, "A MAN OF THE BEATITUDES." You saw upon the slightest acquaintance, that he had formed himself with care on the example of his Master, and that it was his aim to be always like him gentle, meek, humble, and tranquil. His natural dispositions and temper were undoubtedly good; he neither exemplified nor believed the doctrine of man's original depravity. His mind was finely strung, and its powers nicely balanced; and God seems to have given him no strength of passion, except sensibility. His sensibility was acute and delicate. Perhaps of this part of himself he was not sufficiently master; but it contributed to make him a very interesting man. It gave a great glow and ardour to his friendship, and made his attachments strong and pure. It gave him great zeal in his religion, and probably influenced him to consider it, so much as he did, a matter of the affections. He valued its purifying, elevating, and consoling influences on the heart, as the great object and design of the gospel. He could not bear that it should run into literary or metaphysical speculations, or be wasted upon any thing which has a tendency to cool the fervour of the spirit, or repress the warmth of the affections. But there was nothing of extreme animation, nothing loud and furious in his fervour. Religion was emphatically with him *the still, small voice;* all within and without obeyed it, but without any bustle or ostentation; it was always sober and calm, except when occasionally it excited to excess the gentler emotions, and checked his utterance, and found vent in tears. This, which describes his general character, is a description also of his preaching. He perhaps never was vehement, and seldom touched the strings of the stronger passions; but he always interested you, and his sentiments

came upon your soul like the mild fanning of a sweet breeze, and you forgot to ask whether he was eloquent; and you perceived how much he was engaged, not by the power of his declamation or the violence of his gesture, but by the quivering of his lip, and the filling of his eye, and his interrupted utterance.

These qualities rendered him particularly engaging in the pastoral duties of his office. His tenderness and sensibility soothed those whom he visited in trouble, and rendered him deservedly dear to his flock; while the evident sincerity and depth of his piety wrought as an example to promote their devotion; teaching them by his own devout and serious, yet cheerful deportment, to make religion the constant and intimate friend of their lives. His devotedness to them was great. He made their interests his own, and appeared to have no wishes, pursuits, or plans, with which they were not associated. A separation from them was the only subject on which he could not speak to the last without emotion. Of death he conversed calmly; but when he thought of his people he was moved. "On this subject" (he says, in a letter from Charleston, March 3, 1819) "I must think and feel in silence. I have not yet sufficient self-command to speak to any one of my fears and hopes; and hardly dare trust myself yet to look steadily forward to the possibilities of the future. Before I was sick, perhaps I might have had more firmness of heart; but the numberless and unexpected expressions of kind interest which the season of my calamity has called forth from those, whose affections I desired most earnestly to conciliate, have created and nourished feelings, which I can never lose, and strive as yet in vain rightly to regulate." His sensibility upon this topic remained, when every other earthly object seemed to be merged in the thought of heaven; and the constant, kind, and delicate attentions of the people he so much loved, were in the highest degree grateful and soothing.

It is not strange that to such a man his friends should be warmly attached; and the energy with which they speak of him, forms the most unsuspicious eulogium of his worth. They seem to labour for expressions that shall adequately convey their sense of his excellence; even they who knew him from infancy, who have been familiar with him at every period of his life, who were grown when he was a boy, and have watched the whole progress of his character, regard him with a sort of veneration, as if he were a purer being than commonly visit earth. Such is the fascinating power of a character consistently religious! The proverb did not hold true in respect to him,

that no one is great to his intimates;* for it is they, chiefly, that looked upon him with wonder. They say, that although being human, he must have had his faults, yet they never discovered them, and cannot tell what they were.

Habitual and fervent piety was his ruling principle. It was his settled reverence for the Divine character, and his trust in the perfect wisdom and goodness of providence, that supported his perpetual evenness of disposition, and gave him so much resignation and cheerfulness in the long trial of his sickness, and his weary approach to the tomb. During his voyage, when his nights were made restless by his cough and boisterous weather, his mind, he said, was tranquillized by the recollection of passages from the Psalms; and he remarked on their wonderful adaptation to every season and circumstance of affliction. He mentioned also the pleasure he took in repeating that beautiful hymn of Mrs. Steele, which begins thus:

> "O Lord, my best desires fulfill,
> And teach me to resign
> Life, health, and comfort to thy will—
> And be thy pleasure mine."

The sentiment of this hymn expresses the habitual temper of his mind.

I do not believe that he had a particle of asperity in him. He indulged no ill will; he would not willingly hurt the feelings of the meanest, and never allowed himself to feel uncharitably toward those who differed from him. He was truly liberal; although perfectly decided in his own opinions, and in his aversion to some systems as corruptions of the gospel and of injurious tendency, yet he unfailingly spoke of those who held such views with tenderness and respect; he allowed them readily the excellencies that belonged to them, and found pleasure in commending where commendation was due.

The views of the Christian religion, on which a character so truly christian was built, and to which he held with unaltered and even increasing satisfaction to the last, were simple and unperplexed. He loved to regard the gospel as a gift to all men of every condition and capacity, which the simplest might understand, and every one alike practice. Its great, important, essential doctrines, he believed to be very few and very plain, and grieved that they should have been so much darkened by words without knowledge. In accordance with

* Hannah More has applied it to *Christians*, once in its full extent, and once as follows: "It requires as much circumspection to be a *Christian* as to be 'a hero to one's *valet-de-chambre*.'"

this, he observed, after his partial recovery from his first confinement, that the truths, which he then found important to him, were exceedingly few; and that, to which he clung for support, when from extreme debility his mind was incapable of retaining another idea, was, that salvation had come to him by Jesus Christ.

He was a decided Unitarian upon principle and from inquiry. He believed the doctrine of the single and unapproached supremacy of the Father, to be a clear and most important doctrine of revealed religion. He honoured Jesus as the Son and messenger of God, and believed that he had an existence before he entered our world; he never spake of him but in terms of veneration and love; but he reserved his *worship* for the Father. HIM he delighted to contemplate and speak of in his paternal character; his goodness, universal and impartial, he believed to be essential to his perfection and glory, and was perpetually displaying it in his preaching to the adoration and love of his people. He had no belief that He had formed any being necessarily evil, and incapable by nature of pleasing him; or that he suffers men to come into existence subject, to a corruption which they cannot remove; on account of which they are to perish forever, except He please of his own mercy to prevent it; and that this mercy He will exert only in favour of a few elect. He knew that the scriptures did not teach him this, he felt that reason and conscience and the affections of the heart revolt from it, and he was sure that it appeared to attribute a dishonourable government to the God of mercy. He on the contrary, believed that all men are placed on an equal footing, to be tried with an impartial trial, and judged with an impartial judgment; that none are excluded from the benefits of the gospel; and that nothing but an abuse of the means, which are put in every man's power, can deprive any one of that immortality for which he is created. Hence his preaching was affectionate; he endeavoured to move by representations of the astonishing goodness and mercy of God, and to win by accents of kindness. He did not neglect, however, occasionally to urge the terrors of the Lord. But he did it as "a strange work," with a faultering voice and quivering lip,* and was once so affected by the subject that his emotion obliged him to pause and recover himself.

His views of the christian life were exceedingly exalted, and he insisted upon a very pure and rigid standard of moral excellence. "It seems to me," he says, "that very much of the

* See a fine passage in Robert Hall's Sermons.

want of religious principle and conduct among men is owing to their want of conviction how hard it is to become a sincere and obedient follower of Christ. We are apt to think too little of the extent and variety of religious obligations, and the difficulties and trials, the sorrows and temptations, which render it so necessary to work with earnestness. We are in no danger of exerting too much self denial, or maintaining too unearthly a temper, for we are called upon to be *perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect.*"

His opinion in regard to the dependence of future felicity on character, and the manner in which the gospel prepares for it, is so well stated in the following paragraph, and was so important in its influence upon his whole religious system, that we cannot forbear the gratification of copying it. It is from a letter without date.—"The design of all the obedience which the gospel requires, of its precepts, rules, and spirit, is to form us to a certain character, to certain habits and feelings, which are the *qualifications* for a spiritual state hereafter. When we think of the present world, it is evident, that in order to rightly discharging the services relating to it, in order to enjoy the blessings and comforts it yields, we need a peculiar kind of character,—a character *adapted* to this world. It is thus with regard to a future state; in order to be qualified for its services and joys, we need to have certain habits, dispositions, capacities,—without which, we should be unqualified to perform its services, or share its joys. Death makes no change in our character,—it only alters the *state* of our existence; and we shall enter a future world with the same habits, feelings, tempers, with which we departed from this. And the great design of the gospel is, by enjoining certain acts, and inculcating certain dispositions, to train us up to that character which is meet for the inheritance of the saints."

It would be easy to go on and multiply extracts, which should make still more complete the delineation of his character and opinions; but it is time to forbear. The memory of what he was can never pass away from the minds of his friends and people; and we have done enough perhaps in our endeavour so to make him known, as shall promote the interests of religion.

As such a character is valuable to all christians, so it is especially to those, who are pursuing their preparation for the sacred ministry. The cause of truth and human improvement rejoices in the services of such men; and let them go forth to the labours of the church thus exemplary and blameless themselves, and they need not fear to be disappointed or overthrown. Let them make it their first care to *live* the gospel, and they cannot be unsuccessful in preaching it.

And while such men are formed beneath the influence of the plain and simple doctrines of Unitarianism, let none be so absurd as to believe, that they deny all which is vital and sanctifying in the gospel. Who can look upon such, and not be persuaded, that this faith is abundantly sufficient to all the wants of the soul; that man does not need mysterious and unintelligible dogmas to excite a reverence for God, and keep piety alive; but that the virtues and graces, which most adorn man, and which are by all Christians most valued as the genuine fruits of their religion, may spring up and flourish and become mature under the influence of a system, which has been branded as cold, heartless, and impious—as the offspring of boasting reason, and little better than infidel philosophy. If our Lord was right in declaring that false prophets should be known by their fruits, who will pronounce *this* man a false prophet? And who, with an ordinary share of candour, will refuse to acknowledge, that that MAY, at least, be the truth of God, which has proved so abundant in the fruits of his spirit?—For ourselves, we rest upon it with perfect confidence; we rejoice in it as the WISDOM OF GOD, AND THE POWER OF GOD; it has supported many, who have gone before us, amid duty, trial, and danger, and been to them as the rod and staff of God in the shadow of death. We humbly trust that it will equally sustain us; and although every where spoken against, and treated by our brethren as a denial of the faith, we will not cease to love it, or shrink from defending it, as the truth which is to save; we are satisfied to be companions of such men as Abbot; and turning from the judgment of man will say, *Our witness is in Heaven; our record is on high.**

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR.

No. II.

WE are induced to break in upon our plan, and give a second article under this head, for the sake of noticing the following extracts from letters of a highly respected friend, who has recently renounced the errour of the Trinity.

* The writer of this article is indebted to the kindness of several friends, whose communications have assisted him in preparing it, and whose language he has occasionally interwoven with his own, when it could not be altered without injury to the sense.

"Though I am fully satisfied that the doctrine of the trinity, and that of the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ, are not agreeable to the general tenour of the scriptures, yet there are some passages, on which I should be glad to see some explanatory remarks. Two passages of this kind, which I now recollect, I will mention to you; hoping that from you, or through the medium of the Christian Disciple, or from some other source, I may obtain a better view of them.

"Heb. i. 10. 'And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, &c.' Notwithstanding the remarks of Mr. Yates, this verse appears to me to be an address from the Father to the Son. But in Psalm cii. 25, of which the passage is a quotation, it appears to be an address of the Psalmist to Jehovah; and, were it not for the application of the passage by the Apostle, I should say, it appears to be an address of the Psalmist to the supreme God. What is the best way of explaining this verse, in connexion with the passage, from which it is quoted?

"Rev. i. 17. 'I am the first and the last.' Also, ii. 8. That this phrase is applied to Christ there will probably be no doubt. Respecting the propriety of applying it to a derived being, I feel a difficulty. If the foregoing remarks should be the occasion of directing the attention of some writer for the Christian Disciple, to the difficulties there suggested, the information thus conveyed might benefit many."

"I will take the liberty of stating another subject, in which I find great difficulty, and which I should be glad to see fairly explained. I refer to the fact, (so I venture to call it, for so it seems to be,) that the Angel of the Lord appeared on several occasions, and yet spoke as though he were God or Jehovah. See Gen. xviii. xxii. 11. 12. xxxi. 11. 13. xlviii. 15. 16. Ex. iii. You know, that Trinitarians consider this Angel to be the second person in the Godhead, and therefore suppose, that he is consistently called both Jehovah, and the Angel of Jehovah. It is true, that this doctrine necessarily implies, either, that he is the Messenger of himself, or that there are two Jehovahs, one sent by the other. I know not which of these consequences they would choose; though probably they would deny both. However that may be, I should wish to go further, than barely to throw a difficulty in their way; I should wish to give a fair explanation of the passages, in which that phraseology occurs, and to shew that they are similar to others, in which the speaker is confessedly not God, and yet speaks in the name, or uses the style of God, without the formal introduction, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Did the Angel speak in the

name of Jehovah? Or was there a special symbol of the divine presence, which might be called the Angel of Jehovah?"

"Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."—Heb. i. 10.

By some the Apostle is understood as addressing these words to God. By others he is understood to represent God as addressing them to his Son. No grammatical difficulty is in the way of either of these interpretations. So far as the structure of the sentence goes, one is as probable as the other. We must proceed therefore to other considerations to decide which to select. The Apostle has been speaking of the dignity of Christ, and adducing passages from the Old Testament in proof of it. These words are quoted from the Psalms. If then the Psalmist can be considered as referring in them to our Lord, the Apostle also may be understood to make this application of them But if the sense of the passage in the Psalms is irreconcileable with this supposition, and there is a pertinent sense consistent with their primary design, in which the words may be employed by the Apostle, we cannot hesitate to prefer it. We think it will be made obvious by reading the Psalm with attention, that the words preclude entirely the supposition of any other sense, than that of an address of the author to God, and that to suppose the Apostle to have adopted them in any other, and above all as a proof passage, is to suppose a glaring incongruity.

If used then by St. Paul in the same signification which they had originally, will they give a pertinent sense? We think, not only a pertinent, but a forcible and beautiful one. We understand the Apostle as shewing the stability of Christ's kingdom, by declaring, after the Psalmist, that God is its support, and that this God is eternal, the same that "in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth" &c. Unto the Son it is said, God is thy throne for ever and ever, &c. And thou, Lord, [who art his throne or support] in the beginning hast laid, &c.*

"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."—Rev. i. 17. "These expressions," says Yates, who, we think, interprets them rightly, "signify that Jesus Christ is contemporary with the earliest

* See *Disciple*, New Series, vol. I. p. 421. Note.

and latest events in that dispensation over which he has been ordained by the Almighty to preside." Our Lord declares in substance the same thing concerning himself, which the Apostle declares concerning him (Heb. xii. 2.) that he is "the author and finisher of our faith." Or he may be understood to say,—in connexion with the clause in the next verse, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death,"—that though when on earth he was the last, that is, the meanest and most despised of beings. (Isa. liii. 3.) he was now the first, that is, the greatest of all, being exalted at the right hand of God. (Comp. Matt. xx. 16.) To bring the words in proof of his deity is to dispute his own authority. He has himself expressly precluded this application of them. "When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am *thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book*, WORSHIP GOD.—And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*" (Rev. xxii. 8, 9. 12, 13.)

We are willing, though it may be thought superfluous, to fortify our ground—that this text does nothing to support the tenet of the deity of Christ—by trinitarian aid. "By the phrase, *beginning and end*, in the Apocalypse," says Erasmus, (ad loc. John viii. 25) "it is well known that we must understand, that Christ is the commencement, and the completion of his church; that he founded it at his first coming, and will perfect it at his last." And in opposition to the idea which has been entertained that the words *the first and the last*, denote independent existence, Calvin remarks on them (ad loc. Esai. xliv. 6.) "The prophet does not declare in these words the eternity of God, but his consistency with himself, so that he might be expected to be in time to come, what he had been experienced to be in time past." And again; (Esai. xlviii. 12.) "he teaches nothing but that God is always consistent with himself; that neither his character nor his designs change like those of men; therefore he declares himself to be the first and last. It is to be observed, that Isaiah is not speaking of God's eternity."

In the other passages referred to by our correspondent, the angel of the Lord is said to have appeared, and "spoken as though he were God or Jehovah." We are asked to give an account of this form of speech.

God is an invisible, omnipresent spirit. (1 Tim. vi. 16. Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.) When he exhibits himself to men, it is by means of some symbol, or representation to the senses; and this, whatever it be, through which he appears or speaks, is called in scripture, the *angel* or *messenger* of God. Prophets and priests are called so, (Hag. i. 13. Mal. ii. 7.;) and some understand the winds to have this epithet applied to them (Ps. civ 4.) Now it is obvious, that no shape, angelic, human, or inanimate, through which it may please God to communicate with men, can comprehend the illimitable divinity. When His will is declared through a prophet, whose authority is acknowledged, it seems most natural that the prophet should deliver the message in his own name, declaring it to have been received from God. But when any other instrument is used, either a supernatural appearance, or some familiar form of material nature, it seems equally to be expected that God should speak in his own person. In this latter case, the phraseology does not strike us as peculiar,—why should it in the former? We are told,—to give a few of many instances of the same sort,—of God's *calling* to Moses out of the mountain (Exod. xix. 3.) of his *coming* to Elijah by a voice (1 Kings xix. 13.) where a form of words remarkably similar is employed; of his answering Job out of the whirlwind (xxxviii. 1. xl. 6.) and of his attesting the mission of his son from heaven (Matt. iii. 17.) We find no difficulty in the form of language in which God is said to speak from a mountain or a whirlwind. We apprehend that in which he is said to speak by an angel to be precisely parallel. He is with equal propriety represented as *himself speaking*, in one as in the other.

We are not aware of any difficulty remaining. If however there be one, we do not see how in any degree it is diminished by the supposition of the angel of the Lord being identical with a second person in the Godhead; far less, how it can be employed to prove that such a person exists. If the Son be "very God of very God," "equal in power and glory with the Father," we do not see how the title *angel of the Lord*, could be applied to him with propriety in any sense in which it might not equally be applied to the Father. Of course we do not see how the use of the phrase can be supposed to imply any thing in support of the dogma of a distinction of persons. Nor do we apprehend that the angel of the Lord, by whom he spoke, can be affirmed to be a person in the Godhead by any argument, which might not with equal colour of truth be employed to shew the same thing concerning the mountain, the voice, the whirlwind, and the cloud, in the passages referred to in the last paragraph.

We feel the more confidence in our opinion that these passages have no bearing on the trinitarian doctrine, from its coinciding with that of two great reformers. "If," says Luther, "there were no other proof of the trinity than this, I should not believe it." "As to the argument of some ancient writers," says Calvin, "that Abraham discerned by faith three persons in the Godhead, because he worshipped one of the three whom he had seen, it is better not to use it, as it is frivolous, and liable to cavil and ridicule." (See also 1 Kings v. 2, 3, 8. Luke vii. 6.)

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

BISHOP WATSON'S ACCOUNT OF HIS METHOD OF STUDYING DIVINITY.*

"I REDUCED the study of divinity into as narrow a compass as I could, for I determined to study nothing but my bible, being much unconcerned about the opinions of councils, fathers, churches, bishops, and other men, as little inspired as myself. This mode of proceeding being opposite to the general one, and especially to that of the Master of Peterhouse, who was a great reader, he used to call me the self-taught divine. It had been thought to be a duty to demolish every opinion, which militated against what is called the *orthodoxy* of the Church of England. Now my mind was wholly unbiassed: I had no prejudice against, no predilection for the Church of England; but a sincere regard for the Church of *Christ*, and an insuperable objection to every degree of dogmatical intolerance. I never troubled myself with answering any arguments, which the opponents in the divinity schools brought against the articles of the Church, nor ever admitted their authority as decisive of a difficulty: but I used to say to them, holding the New Testament in my hand, *Behold the sacred book.* Here is the fountain of truth; why do you follow the streams derived from it by the sophistry, or polluted by the passions of men? If you can bring proofs against any thing delivered in this book, I shall think it my duty to reply to you; articles of churches are not of divine authority; have done with them: they may be true, they may be false; and appeal to the sacred volume itself. This mode of disputing gained me no credit with the hierarchy,

* Bishop Watson's Life, p. 37, American edition.

but I thought it an honest one, and it produced a liberal spirit in the University."

RELIGION.

"Religion seems to be as necessary to mankind as water; the purest of both is the most salutary—yet in that state neither please the vulgar palate. In all ages mankind have been fond of adulterating both with foreign ingredients; those ingredients are often of an intoxicating quality, which perverts their beneficial nature, heats the brain, renders men quarrelsome, sometimes furious, and makes what was intended as a blessing, operate as a curse."

LOCKE AND NEWTON.

In Hannah More's last work, is the following passage:

"By these same simple truths, martyrs and confessors, our persecuted saints, and our blessed reformers, were saved. By these few simple truths, Locke, and Boyle, and Newton, were saved; not because they saw their religion through the glass of their philosophy, but because theirs was not 'a philosophy, falsely so called;' nor their science, 'a science of opposition;' but a science and a philosophy which were made subservient to Christianity, and because their deep humility sanctified their astonishing powers of mind. These wonderful men, at whose feet the learned world is still satisfied to sit, sat themselves at the feet of Jesus."

Locke and Newton are here set by the side of the martyrs, saints, and reformers, and declared to have been saved by the *same simple truths.* Yet Mrs. More could not have been ignorant that they were Unitarians. It is exceedingly comforting to read passages like this,—and not a few such are to be found in the writings of the orthodox—for they confirm us in the truth of the sentiment on which we love to dwell, that after all the division and intolerance of the christian world, there are a FEW SIMPLE TRUTHS in which all unite as essential, and which all, when the spirit of sect is not upon them, regard as *alone* essential, sufficient for the most heretical philosopher, as well as the most orthodox reformer. It is comforting also to find, that heresy will not keep good men forever out of the pale of the church, but when the generation has passed away in which they lived, and the controversies of the age are forgot-

ten, they will be acknowledged by all and honoured by all; even those, who persecute the men who tread in their steps, and denounce their opinions as 'another gospel,' will speak of them with reverence as lights of the world. Those that have no language too vile for Priestley, are continually loud in the praise of Newton, who held his most obnoxious tenet; and they that think a short creed to be little better than infidelity in disguise, place Locke, who wrote in defence of that same short creed, among the most eminent of believers. When *Christianity* is to be urged upon the sceptical, or the authority of great names is for any reason important, the appeal is always made at once, by Christians of every name, to Locke and Newton. This is as it should be; it is a joyful circumstance that it is so. It is the tacit consent of Christendom to our favourite maxim, that the gospel is a simple thing; it shows the folly and inconsistency of vehement outcries against heretics; for it assures us, that time will bring differing good men into fellowship, and that present distinctions shall be no wall of partition in heaven.

[The following "Lines suggested by a visit to the tomb of the late Rev Samuel Cary in the Burial-ground belonging to the Unitarian Church at Hackney," are from the *Monthly Repository*, a British Unitarian publication. To those of our patrons in whose minds they revive the image of the respected pastor or friend, they will probably have a value independent of any poetical merit.]

Cary! to bid thy native shores adieu,
In distant lands to find a mortal's doom:
The plaintive tale shall Pity oft renew,
As sad, she lingers near the stranger's tomb.
And oft the love, that vainly strove to save
A life so dear, by meddling memory led,
Shall pass, in thought, the vast Atlantic wave,
Where Fancy paints these dwellings of the dead.
Nor clos'd thy day by fondest cares unblest,
Nor meets thy corse the angry bigot's scorn;
Midst scenes that Priestley loved, thy ashes rest,
And wait, in hope, the promised rising morn.

J. T. R.

REVIEW.

ARTICLE I.

A Vindication of certain Passages in the common English version of the New Testament, addressed to Granville Sharp, Esq. author of the "Remarks on the uses of the Definitive article in the Greek New Testament." By the Rev. Calvin Winstanley, A. M. Cambridge, Hilliard & Metcalf, 1819. 8vo. pp. 55.

This able little work, which we are glad to see republished amongst us, is designed to vindicate the correctness of the translation of a few verses in the New Testament, from a proposed amendment of Granville Sharp, who insists that they should be so rendered as to declare Jesus to be God. This gentleman, in the year 1798, published what he thought he had discovered to be rules in the use of the Greek article, according to which he asserted, that, in the texts in question, the writers designed, instead of a *distinction* between God and Christ, to intimate that they are the same being. By the establishment of these rules it was thought that an unanswerable argument was obtained in favour of the doctrine of the trinity; and the exultation with which they were hailed, may not unfairly be supposed to indicate a conscious weakness in the old arguments. And it must be acknowledged in truth, that if the rules and their application were unquestionable, a strength is gained to the other presumptive proofs by which that doctrine is supported; and therefore, however it might seem, at first thought, rather astonishing and incredible that a fundamental doctrine of divine revelation should depend for one of its most plausible supports on a grammatical nicety, which lay almost unregarded and unapplied till the close of the eighteenth century—and that the apostles, natives of Judea, who are known and acknowledged to have written by no means in classical Greek, should be perfect adepts in the use of a particle, which in all languages is a matter of great delicacy—notwithstanding this, we say, yet, since the assertion has been confidently made and pertinaciously persisted in,—so that many trinitarians even in their sermons and other publications for the mass of the people, have not hesitated to say, that the

common version is altogether unfaithful, that these texts DEMAND another rendering—therefore, we cannot but esteem it a duty, in all who have the ability, to give the question a fair examination. Such an examination may be made without great difficulty, and will satisfy any candid mind, that the argument cannot be insisted upon; that the rule is liable to so many exceptions and limitations, that it is impossible to argue from it in any given case, without taking into view other circumstances, and considerations of a wholly different nature.

It is not our design to enter into any discussion of this subject, but simply to recommend to those, who are desirous of being satisfied in regard to it, the tract of Winstanley, which is now easily to be obtained; and which not only examines and refutes the argument with learning and skill, but, what may be of weight with some, was written by a Trinitarian, who had every motive to wish to find it true.

An appendix follows, containing a brief, but very lucid and acute examination of Middleton's doctrines upon this subject, and some extracts from the remarks of the Monthly Review upon Middleton's work. The whole will well repay a careful perusal, and be found satisfactory to the inquiring scholar.

ARTICLE II.

A Sketch of my Friend's Family, intended to suggest some practical hints on Religion and Domestic Manners. By MRS. MARSHALL, Author of Henwick Tales.

"In every work, regard the Writer's end."

Boston: Charles Ewer, 1819.

THIS is a pleasant book, and, we think, well calculated to do good. Its object is sufficiently made known by the title page, and is accomplished by the account of a gentleman's short visit to the family of a friend, in which he finds religion the handmaid of order, cheerfulness and happiness, and diffusing a charm over all the intercourse of a delightful circle. The mistress of the house, Mrs. Clifford, is an accomplished woman, of fine understanding and cultivated taste, who attends to the education of her own children, and makes her accomplishments and piety work together for their improvement. She is a sober, rational, and consistent christian; and being blessed with a husband of similar views, tastes, and feelings, is enabled to render all the arrangements of her household subject to the great principles

of duty and conscience. We might perhaps make reasonable objections to some of their notions respecting the discipline of children, and might say that his conversation with them is not always the most discreet; especially in one remarkable instance, near the commencement of the book, in which he talks in a very strange and bewildering style about total depravity, with the intention of persuading his daughter—"a sweet girl of fifteen years old"—that "she is by nature a child of wrath even as others;" with one or two other similar misapplications of scripture language. This, however, is the only passage of the kind in the work; all the rest, with the exception of a few insulated phrases, is quite innocent and inoffensive, and for the most part very judicious. And the dialogue just alluded to appears to have been written merely to unburden the author's conscience, by declaring that she was sound in that article of the faith; and as there is nothing more of it, we presume it to have been inserted from a mistaken sense of duty contrary to her better judgment. Indeed she has no great zeal for the doctrine; for she makes Mr. Clifford abandon it as soon as possible, and speak of human nature and human duty in a strain of sober good sense, utterly inconsistent with it. If our readers are not too much displeased with this commencement of the book to go on, they may find an antidote in the following sentence. Mr. Clifford had just spoken of the happy death of a friend.

"'You mean, I suppose,' said I, 'that Arthur before his death, had the same views of religion, as you have.' 'My dear Bentley,' he answered with the earnestness of one, who feels it to be important that he should be rightly understood; 'it is in vain to talk of *views* and *sentiments* in religion. I will venture to affirm that the religion which goes no farther, is little better than *practical atheism*.'"

There is a fine scene exemplifying *religious dissipation*, which cannot fail to gratify and instruct our readers, and therefore we quote it entire.

"We had not risen from the breakfast-table one morning, when a female, rather young, and fashionably dressed, entered the room. After a few common place civilities she turned to Mrs. Clifford, saying, 'I called to tell you that Mr S——— is in town, he preaches today at ———, and you must positively put on your things, and go with me to hear him.' 'Could I consistently do so,' replied her friend, 'I should be very happy to accompany you; but, excuse me if I say, that were this excellent man to see the dear little group by which I am surrounded he would be the first to forbid my leaving them to listen to his sermon.'

"Perhaps the conscious recollection of some duty unperformed at home, just then stung the feelings of our fair devotee; or it might be purely a misguided zeal, which reddened on her cheek, as she retorted somewhat sharply, 'When, like Martha's, the heart is careful and troubled about many things, it is easy to find a pretext of duty to prevent our listening to the words of Jesus.'

"Mrs. Clifford mildly answered, 'I hope I am aware of this plausible deception, but in the present instance I am not conscious of meriting the rebuke. You may remember, my dear Mrs. Hammond, that Martha was not censured for a necessary attention to her *ordinary* and relative duties; but for an undue anxiety, an ostentatious and ill-timed desire of providing "things more than hospitably good." Perhaps too, I may remind you that there subsists a visible difference between her neglecting to hear the words of the Redeemer, when he honoured her roof with his sacred presence, and my declining to attend the discourse of one of his servants, when such an attendance would necessarily involve a neglect of duties, more strictly enjoined upon me.' 'You have always a great deal to say about *duties*, my dear,' resumed the lady; 'but if I read my bible aright, no duties are so acceptable with God, as an affectionate reception of his gospel, and a desire to see his kingdom advanced in our own hearts, and in the world around us.' She then magnanimously declared her resolution 'to persist in her attachment to the "word preached," although it continued to expose her to many domestic sacrifices and involved her in several petty persecutions.'

"I believe Mrs. Clifford could have evinced to her fair friend, that she had *not* 'read her bible aright;' but as a spirit of recrimination certainly was not the temper by which she sought to maintain the honour of religion, she thought it better to drop the subject, than to expose her visitor to the imminent risk of losing her temper.

"A short silence therefore ensued, till Mr. Clifford inquired of Mrs. Hammond, 'Whether she had yet had an opportunity of visiting the sick woman, whose case he recommended to her?' 'No, really,' she replied, 'I have not had one moment of leisure since you named her to me. On Monday, I was at a bible society's meeting; Tuesday, I went to hear Mr. ——— preach; Wednesday, I dined at Mrs. Nelson's, where a select number of serious friends were assembled to meet the Rev. Mr. H———; all Thursday I was occupied in endeavouring to procure subscribers to our Dorcas society; and to-day I shall hardly have time to swallow my dinner, on my return home, before the arrival of a lady, who has promised to go with me to hear a sermon for the benefit of our Sunday school.'

"As Mrs. Hammond paused, I asked my friend, in a low voice, 'Is it possible to be *religiously dissipated?*' 'I fear it is a *possible*, though not, I should hope, a very frequent case,' he observed; then turning to the lady who had given birth to the supposition, he said, 'As your engagements are already so numerous, I fear your intended charity will come too late for poor Susan. Our Emma saw her on Wednesday, she was then almost incapable of receiving any nour-

ishment; and I believe, that in a few days, her sufferings and her wants will cease.'

"If I mistake not, Mr. Clifford designed to convey a practical reproof to this 'wandering star,' and perhaps for a moment it was felt as such; but soon the salutary effects of her regret evaporated in extravagant expressions of sorrow.' 'Surely,' she exclaimed, 'there never was so unfortunate a being before. I would have made *any* sacrifices rather than have lost the opportunity of hearing the dying language of this poor but pious creature!' Then addressing Emma, 'How I envy you, Miss Clifford; it must be a sweet satisfaction, to reflect on the many hours which, for this year past, you have spent in reading to the aged sufferer. Perhaps, my dear, you will write a short narrative of her; it would be a charming obituary; send it to me when it is drawn up, and I will get it published next month Don't you think it would be very interesting, Mrs. Clifford" she continued, turning to her, before she had given Emma time to reply.

"Emma bit her lips, to prevent a smile, though the mention of Susan's name at other times, might more easily have drawn a tear to her eyes.

"Mrs. Clifford replied, 'to us, who have so long witnessed her patient sufferings, every circumstance of Susan's death would be highly interesting; but I doubt whether it would be equally so to the public eye. I agree with you, however, in thinking that Emma has been highly privileged in reading to her from that sacred volume, which has furnished the comfort and support of a long life. In witnessing the triumph of a faith like Susan's, at once so humble and so strong, she has enjoyed an opportunity of instruction, which may never again occur, and which, I trust, she will not fail to improve.' "

"The clock now struck nine, and our morning visitor, starting from her seat, took a hasty leave, alleging, that she had a long way to walk, and must be there by ten o'clock, for if she were not in time for the prayer, she should have to stand all sermon time, as it would be impossible to obtain a seat afterwards." p. 64—71.

We wish we had room for the domestic character of this fair devotee; and also for the fine description of Henry Talbot's wife, and the admirable contrast of Mr. Lindsey, the austere religionist, with Mr. Clifford, and the romantic sentimental religion of Olivia, and the touching story of Algernon and Vincent. But for all these, as well as for the interesting history of Mrs. Clifford's first religious impressions, we must refer to the book itself. We do not say that it is faultless; there are some things, especially some modes of expression, which sin against pure sentiment and pure taste; but upon the whole, we think it will be read with pleasure, and we know not why it may not be read with improvement.

ARTICLE III.

A General view of the Doctrines of Christianity, designed more especially for the edification and instruction of Families. Boston, 1809.

The work, of which we have prefixed the title to this article, was published several years ago, and has been read by many among us with pleasure and profit. But it is not known as widely as it should be, and we wish to call to it the notice which it merits. It is not an original work, but was compiled chiefly from the writings of Rev. Robert Fellowes, whose name is probably known to most of our readers. The title we think not altogether happy, because it raises an expectation which the book does not answer. We should expect from it a regular statement of the great truths of our religion; but we find, what at present is perhaps as useful, a vindication of christianity from the gross and dangerous errour, which Calvinism has laboured to identify with this divine system. This may easily be supposed from the table of contents. The book professes to treat of the following subjects:—The nature of religion and the mistakes that occur on that subject; the free-agency and accountableness of man; the fall of Adam, and original sin; the doctrine of faith in general, and of religious faith in particular; the doctrine of works; the doctrine of regeneration; the doctrine of repentance; the doctrine of grace; the doctrine of election and reprobation; the doctrine of perseverance; the visiting of the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; and the sin against the Holy Ghost.—To those who are acquainted with the five thorny points of Calvinism, the design of this compilation will be sufficiently understood from the enumeration of topics now given; and few designs are more praise-worthy, than to free christianity from the reproach brought upon it by that system.

The work under review is professedly popular in its style and mode of discussion. It has little refined and elaborate reasoning, but appeals to the great moral principles of human nature, and to the general strain of the scriptures. It expresses strongly and without circumlocution the abhorrence with which every mind, uncorrupted by false theology, must look on Calvinism; and although some of its delineations may be overcharged, yet they are substantially correct; and their strength is their excellence. The truth is, that nothing is so necessary on this subject as to awaken moral feeling in men's breasts. Calvinism owes its perpetuity to a torpid, palsied state of the

moral nature. Men's minds and consciences are subdued by terrour, so that they dare not confess, even to themselves, the shrinking, which they feel, from the unworthy views which this system gives of God; and by thus smothering their just abhorrence, they gradually extinguish it, and even come to vindicate in God what would disgrace his creatures. A voice of power and solemn warning is needed to rouse them from this lethargy, to give them a new and a juster dread, the dread of incurring God's displeasure, by making him odious, and exposing religion to insult and aversion.

This book will probably be objected to by theologians, because it takes no notice of a notable distinction, invented by Calvinistic metaphysicians, for rescuing their doctrines from the charge of aspersing God's equity and goodness. We refer to the distinction between *natural* and *moral inability*, a subtlety which may be thought to deserve some attention, because it makes such a show in some of the principal books of this sect. But with due deference to its defenders, it seems to us groundless and idle, a distinction without a difference. An inability to do our duty, which is *born* with us, is to all intents and according to the established meaning of the word, *natural*. Call it moral, or what you please, it is still a part of the nature which our Creator gave us, and to suppose that he punishes us for it, because it is an inability seated in the will, is just as absurd and impious, as to suppose him to punish us for a weakness of sight or of a limb. Common people cannot understand this distinction, cannot split this hair; and it is no small objection to Calvinism, that, according to its ablest defenders, it can only be reconciled to God's perfections, by a metaphysical subtlety, which the mass of people cannot comprehend. The passing over of this distinction without notice in the book before us, will expose its phraseology to charges of inaccuracy by Calvinists. But it is substantially correct, and it represents Calvinism, if not as its cautious advocates prefer to exhibit it, yet in the main such as it exists in the minds of its disciples.

If we were to speak as critics of the style of this book, we should say, that whilst generally clear, and sometimes striking, it has the faults of the style which was very current about fifteen or twenty years ago, and which we rejoice to say, is giving place to a better. The style to which we refer, and which threatened to supplant good writing in this country, *intended* to be elegant, but fell into jejuneness and insipidity. It delighted in words and arrangements of words, which were little soiled by common use, and mistook a spruce neatness for grace. We had a Procrustes' bed for sentences, and

there seemed to be a settled war between the style of writing and the free style of conversation. Times we think have changed, and a refreshing change it is. Men have learned more to write as they speak, and are ashamed to dress up familiar thoughts, as if they were just arrived from a far country, and could not appear in public without a foreign and studied attire. They have learned, that common words are common, precisely because most fitted to express real feeling and strong conception, and that the circuitous, measured phraseology, which was called elegance, was but the parade of weakness. They have learned that words are the signs of thought, and worthless counterfeits without it, and that style is good, when instead of being cast into a mould, it seems a free and natural expression of thought, and gives to us with power the workings of the author's mind.

We have been led to make these remarks on the style which in a degree marks the book before us, and which has infected many books manufactured in our own country, not because we love to play the critic, but from a persuasion that this mode of writing, has been particularly injurious to religion, and to rational religion. It has crept into sermons perhaps more than into any other compositions, and has imbued them with that soporific quality, which they have sometimes been found to possess in an eminent degree. How many hearers have been soothed by a smooth watery flow of words, a regular chime of sentences, and elegantly rocked into repose. We are aware, that preachers, above all writers, are excusable for this style, because it is the easiest; and having too much work to do, they must do it of course in the readiest way. But we mourn the necessity, and mourn still more the effect.

It gives us great pleasure to say, that in this particular, we think we perceive an improvement taking place in this region. Preaching is becoming more direct, aims more at impression, and seeks the nearest way to men's hearts and consciences. We often hear from the pulpit strong thought in plain and strong language. It is hoped, from the state of society, that we shall not fly from one extreme to another, and degenerate into coarseness; but perhaps even this is a less evil than tameness and insipidity.—We would here remark, though it is a digression from our main point, that we cannot but ascribe in part the improved style of preaching among us, to the general conviction which now prevails among Unitarian ministers, that they owe it to the cause of truth and christianity, to express as distinctly as possible their peculiar views of religion. Formerly their regard to the peace of the churches, and their deference to the feelings of respected individuals, led them to insist almost

exclusively on the generally received doctrines of christianity, and to communicate their distinguishing sentiments in general language, without contrasting them with opposite opinions; and the consequence was, a vague, indefinite style, with little point and emphasis. We esteem it a cause of gratitude to God, that they have felt it their duty to cast away these generalities, to place the great truths which are committed to them, in the broadest and brightest light of heaven, and to challenge for them the homage which is their due; and the consequence, we think, is, that they preach with greater directness and power, and to this we are in part to ascribe the progress of uncorrupted christianity. This is one of the many happy effects of the late conflict in the religious world, and is a new demonstration of the providence of Him who bringeth good from evil.

To return; the principal argument against Calvinism in the "General View of Christian doctrines" is the *Moral argument*, or that which is drawn from the inconsistency of the system with the divine perfections. It is plain that a doctrine which contradicts our best ideas of goodness and justice, cannot come from the just and good God, or be a true representation of his character. This moral argument has always been powerful to the pulling down of the strong holds of Calvinism. Even in the dark period, when this system was shaped and finished at Geneva, its advocates often writhed under the weight of it, and we cannot but deem it a mark of the progress of society, that Calvinists are more and more troubled with the palpable repugnance of their doctrines to God's nature, and accordingly labour to soften and explain them, until in many cases the name only is retained. If the stern reformer of Geneva could lift up his head, and hear the mitigated tone in which some of his professed followers dispense his fearful doctrines, we fear, that he could not lie down in peace, until he had poured out some of the maledictions which he exhausted on Servetus, on their cowardice and degeneracy. He would tell them with a frown, that *moderate Calvinism* was a solecism, a contradiction in terms, and would bid them in scorn to join their real friend, Arminius. Such is the power of public opinion and of an improved state of society on creeds, that naked, undisguised Calvinism is not very fond of showing itself, and many of consequence know imperfectly what it means. What then is the system against which the "View of Christian doctrines" is directed?

Calvinism teaches, that in consequence of Adam's sin in eating the forbidden fruit, God brings into life all his posterity with a nature wholly corrupt, so that they are utterly indisposed,

disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually. It teaches, that all mankind, having fallen in Adam, are under God's wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. It teaches, that from this ruined race God has elected a certain number to be saved by Christ, not induced to this choice by any foresight of their faith or good works, but wholly by his free grace and love, and that having thus predestinated them to eternal life, he renews and sanctifies them by his almighty and irresistible agency, and brings them into a state of grace, from which they cannot fall and perish. It teaches, that the rest of mankind he is pleased to pass over, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sins, to the honour of his vindictive justice; in other words, he leaves the rest to the corruption in which they were born, withholds the grace which is necessary to their recovery, and condemns them to "most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell fire forever." Such is Calvinism, as gathered from the most authentic records of the doctrine. Whoever will consult the famous Assembly's catechisms and confession, will see the system in all its length and breadth of deformity. A man of plain sense, whose spirit has not been broken to this creed by education or terrour, will think that it is not necessary for us to travel to heathen countries, to learn how mournfully the human mind may misrepresent the Deity.

The *moral argument* against Calvinism, of which we have spoken, must seem irresistible to common and unperverted minds, after attending to the brief statement now given. It will be asked with astonishment, How is it possible that men can hold these doctrines and yet maintain God's goodness and equity? What principles can be more contradictory?—To remove the objection to Calvinism, which is drawn from its repugnance to the divine perfections, recourse has been had, as before observed, to the distinction between natural and moral inability, and to other like subtleties. But the most common, popular, and successful mode of evading it we conceive to be this. Calvinists generally will acknowledge without hesitation, that their doctrine labours under difficulties, that it does *seem* to oppose our convictions of rectitude; but they add, that *apparent* are not always *real* inconsistencies; that God is an infinite and incomprehensible being, and not to be tried by *our* ideas of fitness and morality; that we bring their system to an incompetent tribunal, when we submit it to the decision of human reason and conscience; that we are weak judges of what is right and wrong, good and evil in the Deity; that the happiness of the universe may require an ad-

ministration of human affairs which is very offensive to limited understandings; that we must follow revelation, not reason or moral feeling, and must consider doctrines, which shock us in revelation, as awful mysteries, which are dark through our ignorance, and which time will enlighten. How little, it is added, can man explain or understand God's ways. How inconsistent the miseries of life appear with goodness in the creator. How prone too have men always been to confound good and evil, to call the just, unjust. How presumptuous is it in such a being, to sit in judgment upon God, and to question the rectitude of the divine administration, because it shocks *his* sense of rectitude! Such we conceive to be a fair statement of the manner in which the Calvinist most frequently meets the objection, that his system is at war with God's attributes. Such the reasoning by which the voice of conscience and nature is stifled, and men are reconciled to doctrines, which, if tried by the established principles of morality, would be rejected as blasphemies. On this reasoning we purpose to offer some remarks; and we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity, to give our views of the confidence which is due to our rational and moral faculties in religion.

That God is infinite, and that man often errs, we affirm as strongly as our Calvinistic brethren. We desire to think humbly of ourselves, and reverently of our creator. In the strong language of scripture, "We now see through a glass darkly." "We cannot by searching find out God unto perfection? Clouds and darkness are round about him, His judgments are a great deep." God is great and good beyond utterance or thought. We have no disposition to idolize our own powers, or to penetrate the secret counsels of the Deity. But on the other hand, we think it ungrateful to disparage the powers which our Creator has given us, or to question the certainty or importance of the knowledge which he has seen fit to place within our reach. There is an affected humility, we think, as dangerous as pride. We may rate our faculties too meanly, as well as too boastingly. The worst errour in religion after all, is that of the Sceptic, who records triumphantly the weaknesses and wanderings of the human intellect, and maintains that no trust is due to the decisions of this erring reason. We by no means think, that man's greatest danger springs from pride of understanding, though we think as badly of this vice as other christians. The history of the church proves, that men may trust their faculties too little as well as too much, and that the timidity, which shrinks from investigation, has injured the mind, and betrayed the interests of Christianity, as much as an irreverent boldness of thought.

All religion plainly implies a confidence in, and a respect for our rational and moral powers. It implies, that we have minds endowed and qualified for the highest employments of mind, that is, for apprehending justly the moral attributes of the Creator, and for discerning their proper signs, expressions and effects. It implies and requires capacities which assimilate us to the Divinity. Nothing is gained to piety by degrading human nature, for in the competency of this nature to know and judge of God all piety has its foundation. Our proneness to err instructs us to use our powers with caution, not to contemn and neglect them. The occasional abuse of our faculties does not prove them unfit for their highest end, which is, to form clear and consistent views of God. Because our eyes sometimes fail or deceive us, would a wise man pluck them out, or cover them with a bandage, and choose to walk and work in the dark? or because they cannot distinguish distant objects, can they discern nothing clearly in their proper sphere, and is sight to be pronounced a fallacious guide? Men who, to support a creed, would shake our trust in the calm, deliberate, and distinct decisions of our rational and moral powers, endanger religion more than its open foes, and forge the deadliest weapon for the infidel.

It is true that God is an infinite being, and also true, that his powers and perfections, his purposes and operations, his ends and means, being unlimited, are *incomprehensible.* In other words, they cannot *be wholly taken in* or *embraced* by the human mind. In the strong and figurative language of scripture, we "know nothing" of God's ways; that is, we know *very few* of them. But this is just as true of the most advanced archangel as of man. In comparison with the vastness of God's system, the range of the highest created intellect is narrow; and in this particular, man's lot does not differ from that of his elder brethren in heaven. We are both confined in our observation and experience to a little spot in the creation. But are an angel's faculties worthy of no trust, or is his knowledge uncertain, because he learns and reasons from a small part of God's works? or are his judgments respecting the Creator to be charged with presumption, because his views do not spread through the whole extent of the universe? We grant that our understandings cannot stretch beyond a very narrow sphere. But still the lessons, which we learn within this sphere, are just as sure, as if it were indefinitely enlarged. Because much is unexplored, we are not to suspect what we have actually discovered. Knowledge is not the less real, because confined. The man, who never set foot beyond his native village, knows

its scenery and inhabitants as undoubtingly, as if he had travelled to the poles. We indeed see very little; but that little is as true, as if every thing else were seen; and our future discoveries must agree with and support it. Should the whole order and purposes of the universe be opened to us, it is certain that nothing would be disclosed, which would in any degree shake our persuasion, that the earth is inhabited by rational and moral beings, who are authorised to expect from their creator the most benevolent and equitable government. No extent of observation can unsettle those primary and fundamental principles of moral truth, which we derive from our highest faculties operating in the relations in which God has fixed us. In every region and period of the universe, it will be as true as it is now on the earth, that knowledge and power are the measures of responsibility and that natural incapacity absolves from guilt. These and other moral verities, which are among our clearest perceptions, would, if possible, be strengthened, in proportion as our powers should be enlarged; because harmony and consistency are the characters of God's administration, and all our researches into the universe only serve to manifest its unity, and to show a wider operation of the laws which we witness and experience on earth.

We grant that God is *incomprehensible*, in the sense already given. But he is not therefore *unintelligible;* and this distinction we conceive to be important. We do not pretend to know the *whole* nature and properties of God, but still we can form some *clear ideas* of him, and can reason from these ideas as justly as from any other. The truth is, that we cannot be said to comprehend any being whatever, not the simplest plant or animal. All have hidden properties. Our knowledge of all is limited. But have we therefore no distinct ideas of the objects around us, and is all our reasoning about them unworthy of trust? Because God is infinite, his name is not therefore a mere sound. It is a representative of some *distinct conceptions* of our creator; and these conceptions are as sure, and important, and as proper materials for the reasoning faculty, as they would be if our views were indefinitely enlarged. We cannot indeed trace God's goodness and rectitude through the whole field of his operations; but we know the essential nature of these attributes, and therefore can often judge what accords with and opposes them. God's goodness, because infinite, does not cease to be goodness, or essentially differ from the same attribute in man; nor does justice change its nature, so that it cannot be understood, because it is seated in an unbounded mind. There have indeed been philosophers, "falsely so called," who

have argued from the unlimited nature of God, that we cannot ascribe to him justice and other moral attributes, in any proper or definite sense of those words; and the inference is plain, that all religion or worship, wanting an *intelligible* object, must be a misplaced, wasted offering. This doctrine from the infidel we reject with abhorrence; but something, not very different, too often reaches us from the mistaken christian; who, to save his creed, shrouds the creator in utter darkness. In opposition to both, we maintain that God's attributes are intelligible, and that we can conceive as truly of his goodness and justice, as of these qualities in men. In fact, these qualities are essentially the same in God and man, though differing in degree, in purity, and in extent of operation. We know not and we cannot conceive of any *other* justice or goodness, than we learn from our own nature; and if God have not these, he is altogether unknown to us as a moral being; he offers nothing for esteem and love to rest upon; the objection of the infidel is just, that worship is wasted; "We worship we know not what."—Is it asked, on what authority we ascribe to God goodness and rectitude, in the sense in which these attributes belong to men, or how we can judge of the nature of attributes in the mind of the creator? We answer by asking, How it is that we become acquainted with the mind of a fellow creature? The last is as invisible, as removed from *immediate* inspection, as the first. Still we do not hesitate to speak of the justice and goodness of a neighbour; and how do we gain our knowledge? We answer, by witnessing the effects, operations, and expressions of these attributes. It is a law of our nature to argue from the effect to the cause, from the action to the agent, from the ends proposed and from the means of pursuing them, to the character and disposition of the being in whom we observe them. By these processes, we learn the invisible mind and character of man; and by the same we ascend to the mind of God, whose works, effects, operations, and ends, are as expressive and significant of justice and goodness, as the best and most decisive actions of men. If this reasoning be sound, (and all religion rests upon it,) then God's justice and goodness are intelligible attributes, agreeing essentially with the same qualities in ourselves. Their operation indeed is infinitely wider, and they are employed in accomplishing not only immediate but remote and unknown ends. Of consequence, we must expect that many parts of the divine administration will be *obscure*, that is, will not produce *immediate* good, and an *immediate* distinction between virtue and vice. But still the unbounded operation of these attributes does not change their nature. They are still

the same, as if they acted in the narrowest sphere. We can still determine in many cases what does not accord with them. We are particularly sure that those essential principles of justice, which enter into and even form our conception of this attribute, must pervade every province and every period of the administration of a just being, and that to suppose the creator in any instance to forsake them, is to charge him directly with unrighteousness, however loudly the lips may compliment his equity.

"But is it not presumptuous in man," it is continually said, "to sit in judgment on God." We answer, that to "sit in judgment on God" is an ambiguous and offensive phrase, conveying to common minds the ideas of irreverence, boldness, familiarity. The question would be better stated thus. Is it not presumptuous in man to judge concerning God, and concerning what agrees or disagrees with his attributes? We answer confidently, no: for in many cases we are competent and even bound to judge. And we plead first in our defence the scriptures. How continually does God in his word appeal to the understanding and moral judgment of man. "O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it." We observe in the next place, that all religion supposes and is built on judgments passed by us on God and on his operations. Is it not, for example, our duty and a leading part of piety to *praise* God? And what is praising a being, but to adjudge and ascribe to him just and generous deeds and motives? And of what value is praise, except from those, who are capable of *distinguishing* between actions which exalt, and actions which degrade the character? Is it presumption to call God *excellent*? And what is this, but to refer his character to a standard of excellence, to try it by the established principles of rectitude, and to pronounce its conformity to them? that is, to judge of God and his operations?

We are presumptuous, we are told, in judging of our creator. But he himself has made this our duty, in giving us a moral faculty; and to decline it, is to violate the primary law of our nature. Conscience, the sense of right, the power of perceiving moral distinctions, the power of discerning between justice and injustice, excellence and baseness, is the the highest faculty given us by God, the whole foundation of our responsibility, and our sole capacity for religion. Now we are *forbidden* by this faculty to love a being, who wants, or who fails to discover, moral excellence. God, in giving us conscience, has

implanted a principle within us, which *forbids* us to prostrate ourselves before mere power, or to offer praise where we do not discover worth; a principle, which challenges our supreme homage for *supreme goodness*, and which absolves us from guilt, when we abhor a severe and unjust administration. Our Creator has consequently *waived* his own claims on our veneration and obedience, any farther than he discovers himself to us in characters of benevolence, equity, and righteousness. He rests his authority on the perfect coincidence of his will and government with those great and fundamental principles of morality written on our souls. He desires no worship, but that which springs from the exercise of our moral faculties upon his character, from our discernment and persuasion of his rectitude and goodness. He asks, he accepts, no love or admiration but from those, who can understand the nature and the proofs of moral excellence.

There are two or three striking facts, which show that there is no presumption in judging of God, and of what agrees or disagrees with his attributes. The first fact is, that the most intelligent and devout men have often employed themselves in *proving* the existence and perfections of God, and have been honoured for this service to the cause of religion. Now we ask, what is meant by the *proofs* of a divine perfection? They are certain acts, operations, and methods of government, which are *proper and natural effects, signs, and expressions* of this perfection, and from which, according to the established principles of reasoning, it may be inferred. To prove the divine attributes is to collect and arrange those works and ways of the creator, which *accord with* these attributes, correspond to them, flow from them, and express them. Of consequence, to prove them requires and implies *the power of judging of what agrees with them*, of discerning their proper marks and expressions. All our treatises on natural theology rest on this power. Every argument in support of a divine perfection is an exercise of it. To deny it is to overthrow all religion.

Now if such are the proofs of God's goodness and justice, and if we are capable of discerning them, then we are *not* necessarily presumptuous, when we say of particular measures ascribed to him, that they are *inconsistent* with his attributes, and cannot belong to him. There is plainly no more presumption in affirming of certain principles of administration, that they *oppose* God's equity and would prove him unrighteous, than to affirm of others, that they prove him upright and good. There are signs and evidences of injustice as unequivocal as those of

justice; and our faculties are as adequate to the perception of the last as of the first. If they must not be trusted in deciding what would prove God unjust, they are unworthy of confidence when they gather evidences of his rectitude; and of course, the whole structure of religion must fall.

It is no slight objection to the mode of reasoning adopted by the Calvinist, that it renders the proof of the divine attributes impossible. When we object to his representations of the divine government, that they shock our clearest ideas of goodness and justice, he replies, that still they may be true, because we know very little of God, and what *seems* unjust to man may be in the creator the perfection of rectitude. Now this weapon has a double edge. If the strongest marks and expressions of injustice do not prove God unjust, then the strongest marks of the opposite character do not prove him righteous. If the first do not deserve confidence, because of our narrow views of God, neither do the last. If, when more shall be known, the first may be found consistent with perfect rectitude, so, when more shall be known, the last may be found consistent with infinite malignity and oppression. This reasoning of our opponents casts us on an ocean of awful uncertainty. Admit it, and we have no proofs of God's goodness and equity to rely upon. What we call *proofs*, may be mere *appearances*, which a wider knowledge of God may reverse. The future may shew us, that the very laws and works of the creator, from which we now infer his kindness, are consistent with the most determined purpose to spread infinite misery and guilt, and were intended, by raising hope, to add the agony of disappointment to our other woes. Why may not these anticipations, horrible as they are, be verified by the unfolding of God's system, if our reasonings about his attributes are rendered so very uncertain, as Calvinism teaches, by the infinity of his nature?

We have mentioned one fact to shew that it is not presumptuous to judge of God, and of what accords with and opposes his attributes, namely, the fact that his attributes are thought susceptible of *proof*. Another fact, very decisive on this point, is, that christians of all classes have concurred in resting the truth of christianity in a great degree on its *internal* evidence, that is, on its accordance with the perfections of God. How common is it to hear from religious teachers, that christianity is *worthy* of a good and righteous being, that it bears the marks of a divine original. Volumes have been written on its internal proofs, on the coincidence of its purposes and spirit with our highest conceptions of God.

How common too is it, to say of other religions, that they are *at war* with the divine nature, with God's rectitude and goodness, and that we want no other proofs of their falsehood. And what does all this reasoning imply? Clearly this, that we are capable of determining, in many cases, what is worthy and what is unworthy of God, what accords with and what opposes his moral attributes. Deny us this capacity, and it would be no presumption against a professed revelation, that it ascribed to the Supreme being the most detestable practices. It might still be said in support of such a system, that it is arrogant in man to determine what kind of revelation suits the character of the Creator. Christianity then leans, at least in part, and some think chiefly, on internal evidence, or on its agreeableness to God's moral attributes; and is it probable, that this religion, having this foundation, contains representations of God's government which shock our ideas of rectitude? and that it silences our objections by telling us, that we are no judges of what suits or opposes his infinite nature?

We will name one more fact to shew, that it is not presumptuous to form these judgments of the Creator. All christians are accustomed to reason from God's attributes, and to use them as tests of doctrines. In their controversies with one another, they spare no pains to shew, that their particular views accord best with the divine perfections, and every sect labours to throw on its adversaries the odium of maintaining what is unworthy of God. Theological writings are filled with such arguments; and yet *we*, it seems, are guilty of awful presumption, when we deny of God principles of administration, against which every pure and good sentiment in our breasts rises in abhorrence.

We shall conclude this discussion with an important inquiry. If God's justice and goodness are consistent with those operations and modes of government, which Calvinism ascribes to him, of what use is our belief in these perfections? What expectations can we found upon them? If it consist with divine rectitude to consign to everlasting misery, beings, who have come guilty and impotent from his hand, we beg to know what interest we have in this rectitude, what pledge of good it contains, or what evil can be imagined which may not be its natural result? If justice and goodness, when stretched to infinity, take such strange forms and appear in such unexpected and apparently inconsistent operations, how are we sure, that they will not give up the best men to ruin, and leave the universe to the powers of darkness? Such results indeed seem incompatible with these attributes, but not more so than the acts

attributed to God by Calvinism. Is it said, that the divine faithfulness is pledged in the scriptures to a happier issue of things? But why should not divine faithfulness *transcend* our poor understandings as much as divine goodness and justice, and why may not God, consistently with this attribute, crush every hope which his word has raised? Thus all the divine perfections are lost to us as grounds of encouragement and consolation, if we maintain, that their infinity places them beyond our judgment, and that we must expect from them measures and operations entirely opposed to what seems to us most accordant with their nature.

We have thus endeavoured to shew that the testimony of our rational and moral faculties against Calvinism, is worthy of trust.—We know that this reasoning will be met by the question, What then becomes of Christianity? for this religion plainly teaches the doctrines you have condemned. Our answer is ready. Christianity contains no such doctrines. Christianity, reason, and conscience are perfectly harmonious on the subject under discussion. Our religion, fairly construed, gives no countenance to that system, which has arrogated to itself the distinction of Evangelical. We cannot, however, enter this field at present. We hope to state on a future occasion the testimony of scripture on these points, fully and minutely. At present, we will only say that the *general* spirit of christianity affords a very strong presumption, that its records teach no such doctrines as we have opposed. This spirit is love, charity, benevolence. Christianity, we all agree, is designed to manifest God as *perfect benevolence*, and to bring men to love and imitate him. Now is it probable, that a religion, having this object, gives views of the supreme being, from which our moral convictions, and benevolent sentiments shrink with horror, and which if made our pattern, would convert us into monsters! It is plain that were a human parent to form himself on the universal Father, as described by Calvinism, that is, were he to bring his children into life totally depraved, and then to pursue them with endless punishment, we should charge him with a profligacy unequalled in the annals of Newgate; or were a sovereign to incapacitate his subjects *in any way whatever* for obeying his laws, and then to torture them in dungeons of perpetual woe, we should say, that the blackest crimes of history grow fair and white by the side of this. And is it probable, that a religion, which aims to attract and assimilate us to God, considered as love, should hold him up to us in these heart withering characters? We may confidently expect to

find in such a system the brightest views of the divine nature; and the same objections lie against interpretations of its records, which savour strongly of cruelty and injustice, as lie against the literal sense of passages which ascribe to God bodily wants and organs. Let the scriptures be read with a recollection of the spirit of christianity, and with that modification of particular texts by this general spirit, which a just criticism requires, and Calvinism would no more enter the mind of the reader, than popery, we had almost said, than heathenism.

In the remarks now made, it will be seen, we hope, that we have aimed to expose doctrines, not to condemn their professors. It is true, that men are apt to think themselves assailed, when their system only is called to account. But we have no foe but errour. In many Calvinists we see with pleasure a confirmation of the remark, that men may be better than their creeds. Their characters are formed much more on the broad and acknowledged principles of the gospel, than on the peculiarities of the sect. In fact, a large number, perhaps a majority of those, who surname themselves with the name of Calvin, have little more title to it than ourselves. They keep the name, and drop the principles which it signifies. They adhere to the system as a whole, but shrink from all its parts and distinguishing points. This silent but real defection from Calvinism is spreading more and more widely. The grim features of this system are softening, and its stern spirit yielding to conciliation and charity. With these views, we have little disposition to reproach those who nominally espouse it, although we believe that its influence is yet so extensive and pernicious as to bind us to oppose it.

Calvinism, we are persuaded, is giving place to better views. It has passed its meridian, and is sinking, to rise no more. It has to contend with foes more formidable than theologians, with foes, from whom it cannot shield itself in mystery and metaphysical subtleties, we mean with the progress of the human mind, and with the progress of the spirit of the gospel. Society is going forward in intelligence and charity, and of course is leaving the theology of the sixteenth century behind it. We hail this revolution of opinion as the most auspicious event to the christian cause. We hear much at present of efforts to spread the gospel. But christianity is gaining more by the removal of degrading errours, than it would by armies of missionaries who should carry with them a corrupted form of the religion. We think the decline of Calvinism one of the most promising facts in our passing history; for this system, by

outraging conscience and reason, tends to array these high faculties against revelation. Its errours are peculiarly mournful, because they relate to the character of God. It darkens, stains, pollutes his pure nature; spoils his character of its sacredness, loveliness, glory, beauty; and thus quenches the central light of the universe, makes existence a curse, and the extinction of it a consummation devoutly to be wished. We now speak of the *peculiarities* of this system, and of their natural influence, when not counteracted, as in some degree they always are, by better views, derived from the spirit and plain lessons of christianity.

We have had so much to do with our subject, that we have neglected to pay the usual compliment to the work we proposed to review, by giving extracts from it. This we could do to our own satisfaction and that of our readers. But our limits forbid. We recommend it to perusal, believing that it will give many just views of God and of religion, and will fortify the mind against pernicious errours. Like all human books, it must be read with discrimination. We earnestly wish, that a work, answering to the title of this, which should give us "a general view of christian doctrines" in their natural order and simplicity, might be undertaken by an able hand. Next to a good commentary on the scriptures, it would be the best service which could be rendered to christian truth.

INTELLIGENCE.

Plan of Dr. Spencer's Institution in Bristol, for acquiring and communicating an accurate and critical Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, without Expense.

The principles on which this Institution is founded, are the following:—

First. That which a person is competent to learn, if he be properly instructed, he will be able to teach.

Secondly. When a student has made a certain progress in learning any thing, it will be highly conducive to his improvement to begin to teach it.

Thirdly. Persons in a class of four, upon Dr. Spencer's plan of teaching, will learn more easily and expeditiously than individually.

Fourthly. It is much more pleasant and easy to teach four students in a class, than one alone.

Lastly. It is thought to be much more agreeable to the nature of the spiritual and heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ, his own example, and that of his apostles, that the gospel should be taught freely, than that it should be taught for worldly honours and worldly emoluments.

Every student is gratuitously taught, in a class of four, to become a teacher of four other students, and a superintendant of four classes, consisting of sixteen students and four teaching-students.

Every student engages to instruct four other students upon the same free terms on which he himself receives instruction.

As the teachers and superintendants receive no emolument for their instructions, so none are encouraged to become students, who have not the probable means of supporting themselves and families by their fortunes, professions, or trades. As this is an institution for adults, persons do not become students until they are twenty-one years of age. The institution is open to christians of every denomination, who have received a good English education, and who have sufficient health, mental ability, inclination, perseverance, and time, to enter into it. The time devoted to study is only one hour each day, from seven o'clock in the evening to eight in the winter, and from eight to nine in the summer. Common abilities only are necessary, but very much depends on inclination and perseverance: by which, things almost incredible may be easily effected.

The whole time for learning and teaching is divided into three equal parts. During the first part, persons are students only; during the second, teaching-students; and during the third, teachers and superintendants.

For the first two years the students are taught their own language grammatically, the elements of Rhetoric, Logic, the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Greek of the Septuagint translation and of the New Testament. During the next two years, the students become teaching-students, and for one hour every other day, instruct their students in English Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Hebrew, and Greek; while for one hour every other day, they are taught what is farther necessary to enable them to read well and explain clearly the Holy Scriptures; namely, the geography and natural history of the countries were the Scriptures were written; the history of the four great empires with which the Jews were connected; the customs of the Jews and other Eastern nations; Christian ecclesi-

astical history, &c. &c. The composing of sermons has no place in this institution, because such compositions as are now called by that name, were never delivered by Jesus Christ, his apostles, or by the Christian teachers of the first two centuries—because they are much better calculated to support the peculiar opinions of a party, and to divide the Christian church, than to explain the Holy Scriptures; and further, because it is thought no rational man would ever adopt such a method to make people well acquainted with the contents of any other book. The teaching-students, having at the end of four years completed their course of studies, for two years more teach their students, what they themselves have learned during the last two years of their own education.

The business of the superintendants is to see that the students, teaching-students, and teachers, properly fulfil their respective engagements; to assist by their advice and counsel, and to preside when four classes meet together for prayer, reading, and explaining the Holy Scriptures.

In the class of five, there are four students and one teaching student. In the class of twenty-one, there are sixteen students, four teaching students, and one teacher and superintendant. In the class of eighty-five, which is denominated *the Society*, there are sixty-four students, sixteen teaching-students, four teachers, who are superintendants of twenties, and one who is superintendant of the whole society.

In the class of five, twenty minutes of the hour devoted to instruction, are employed in reverently reading the Holy Scriptures in English. The Books of Holy Scripture are read regularly, chronologically, connectedly, and, as far as we are able, without prejudice: truth and its holy influence being the only objects of the Institution.

This Institution is purely religious, and is to be kept entirely distinct from all that is political; neither asking nor accepting any privileges from the civil government. For a religious society, by accepting privileges from a state, gives that state a plausible pretext for interfering with its principles and government; and in this way, has [illegible]e Christianity been corrupted, and its corruptions are likely thus to be long continued. "*My kingdom is not of this world.*"

TO YOUNG MEN.

Are the twenty-four hours of the day so thoroughly employed, that you cannot apply one to this object?

If you have one hour to spare, can you employ it in a better way?

Will not the advantages you may derive from this Institution compensate for the time employed in it?

Do you not expect to live for ever? Will you not then devote a twenty-fourth part of your time to your own eternal interest and that of others; but the whole to the affairs of a moment? For your whole life, compared with eternity, is not so long as a moment!

Consider, that you have now an opportunity of receiving and of doing much good. See that you do not neglect it.

The following calculation shews, that if one teacher complete the education of four pupils in four years, and the four pupils shall each of them have begun the education of four other pupils at the end of two years, the education of those pupils will be finished at the end of six years; and they will have had in train sixty-four pupils, whose education will be completed at the end of eight years, and so on, till all the world might soon be instructed in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, in the languages in which they were originally written.

Superintendant Teacher	1	
Teaching-Students	4 . . .	Years 4
Students	16	6
	64	8
	256	10
	1,024	12
	4,096	14
	16,384	16
	65,536	18
	262,144	20
	1,048,576	22
	4,194,304	24
	16,777,216	26
	67,108,864	28
	268,435,456	30
	1,073,741,824	32

[The above curious article, which, notwithstanding some strange and indefensible notions, contains valuable hints, we have extracted without alteration from the *Christian Reformer*, of September, 1817.]

Massachusetts Peace Society—The Fourth Annual Report of this truly christian and philanthropic Society, at its anniversary in December last, has been published, and presents a prospect full of animating encouragement to the friends of humanity and religion. It opens with a summary history of its origin and success thus far.

"It is now four years since *twenty-two* brethren of different denominations gave their signatures to the Constitution of this Society. Many of them will long remember the appalling obstacles which were then presented to their minds, and the concern with which they resolved to encounter the host of prejudices in favor of war as a necessary and irremediable evil. But before the close of the year they had distributed 4620 Tracts, and the number of members had increased to 173.

In 1817 they distributed 5370 Tracts, and at the close of the year the Society comprised 301 members.

In 1818, the third year of the Society, 8293 Tracts were distributed—of which 4785 were copies of the Friend of Peace. The same year six Auxiliary or Branch Societies were formed and reported: including these, the whole number of members at the end of the year was upwards of 550.

In the course of 1819 the distribution of Tracts has amounted to 16149—of which 7360 have been copies of the Friend of Peace.

The distribution has extended to nearly all the United States and the British Provinces in America—to Great Britain, France, and Russia in Europe,—to India, and to the Sandwich Islands.

The Society has been increased in the last year by 83 individual members and six additional Auxiliary Societies. The whole number of subscribers to the original Society is - - - - - - - 547
To the twelve Branches - - - - - - - - - 335

Making a total of - - - - - - - - - - 882

There are now in this country, besides the Massachusetts Peace Society, and its twelve Auxiliaries, 15 Peace Societies in the United States: one in Maine, one in Rhode Island, five in New-York, one in North Carolina, five in Ohio, and two in Indiana."

The Clergyman's Almanack.—We regret that the year opened, and we suffered the season, at which families provide themselves with Almanacks, to pass by, without recommending to our readers to purchase the *religious* almanack with the above title. It is well arranged, plain, and interesting; and answers the double purpose of a calendar and a tract. We might give many reasons on account of which all serious people should prefer to have lying on their table, and within constant reach of their children, a little book like this, filled with serious matter and wholesome instruction, rather than to have perpetually in their way the idle and useless anecdotes and jests which usually fill the pages of these pamphlets. But for the present we think it enough to invite the attention of those, to whom the recommendation does not come too late, persuaded that it may be the instrument of no small good.

OBITUARY.

Died at Raleigh, N. C. January 18th, after a lingering illness of nine months, the Rev. Anthony Forster, late Pastor of the Second Independent Church, in Charleston, S. C. The following notice of his character we have extracted partly from a Charleston publication, and partly from the manuscript of a correspondent.

Mr. Forster was a native of North-Carolina, and received his education in the University of that State. At an early period of life he entered the army, with a Lieutenant's commission, and served for some time on our southwestern frontier. After resigning his commission he devoted himself, at first, to the study of Law. But he was not called to the bar—new views opened on his mind, which induced him to relinquish this profession, and dedicate his talents and exertions to the immediate service of the Gospel. After preaching for some time in various churches in this city and vicinity, he was elected into the Independent Church in this city, as temporary Pastor, in the room of the late Dr. Hollingshead, at that time disabled from his labors.

The most important and interesting occurrence in his ministry we cannot pass without notice. He became suspected, in the course of a few years, of heresy on those doctrines peculiarly denominated Calvinism, and was required to subscribe a confession of faith implying his assent to this system. He deemed this an unwarranted requisition; and gave to it a final answer in a masterly communication on the unscripturalness of all human forms of faith. The belief of Mr. Forster in the doctrines of the Trinity, and an atoning and vicarious sacrifice, seems at this time to have continued unshaken. It was in the anxious investigation or discussion which followed, that his active and inquiring mind first misgave him in regard to the truth of what are called these peculiar doctrines, and to the validity of the arguments he had employed in their support. The state of feeling to which this suspicion gave birth, was by no means an enviable one. In his own relation of himself, he passed whole sleepless nights, and his pillow was wet with tears. From distressing doubt and suspense, the only relief which he gained, was in a state of conviction, at first, probably, more painful still. The evidence of the opinions he had fondly devoted himself to extirpate, unfolded itself to his mind, more copious, clear and decisive; and the scales of human error were torn from his eyes. Mr. Forster's attention was first given to purify the service of his church from the offensive doxologies which had hitherto been used. It is not to be supposed, however, that this revolution in his opinions passed unregarded. The more thinking part of his congregation were probably well prepared to receive his simple views of Christianity; and the preaching of Mr. Forster was so skilful and judicious, as without doubt, to have wrought on the minds of many more. Those whose tenacity in their former faith would not permit their continuance in the society, were interchanged with that portion of the associated church, in whom Mr. Forster had produced a sympathy with himself; and the union of the two churches was dissolved.

Previously to this event, Mr. Forster, whose health had not for some years been firm, had been afflicted with a hæmorrhage of the lungs, and though he had, to appearance, regained nearly his usual health, yet his constitution had sustained a shock, from the effects of which it could never recover. In the summer of 1817, and again in that of 1818, he was induced to try the effect of a temporary suspension of his labours, and travelled to the northern and middle States. From both these excursions he returned with evident symptoms of improvement; but the flattering appearances were transient—the fatal arrow was lodged in his vitals, and its effects, though slow and treacherous, were inevitable. In February, 1819, he preached for the last time; soon after this, his weakness increased to such a degree as made it evident that his pastoral labours were closed. About the last of April, he left Charleston with his family for Raleigh, which he reached with difficulty; and there, after a long period of weakness, pain and decay, which he bore with the most exemplary fortitude, resignation and cheerfulness, he expired without a struggle or a groan.

Mr. Forster's was a mind of no ordinary cast; there was something singularly bold and original in his conceptions, the most trite and common subjects acquired from his peculiar manner of presenting them, all the interest and grace of novelty; to this it was doubtless in a great measure to be ascribed, that his public discourses took generally so deep a hold on the attention of his audience. Mr. Forster had *no model*—his views were his own; though they might often be the same that others had taken before him—with him they were original and self-derived. He took his impressions of truth and duty from no man upon trust he examined every thing for himself; it was nothing to him what had been the faith or the practice of others; he acted under an habitual and deep sense of his own personal responsibility for his opinions and his conduct: and every thing was, with him, subjected to the test of rigid and unbending principle: yet there was nothing of obstinacy, of dogmatism or self-sufficiency in his temper. No man listened with more patience or docility, to argument, from whatever quarter; no man could be more free from the folly of a pertinacious adherence to his own opinion, merely because it *was his own*. Of him, if of any man that ever lived it might safely be affirmed, that he was a sincere lover of truth, and to the pursuit of this, he devoted himself with an ardour and singleness of heart, which have seldom been equalled. Of the right of private judgment and free enquiry, in matters of faith, he was a firm and steady asserter. He considered this the fundamental and primary article in that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and no earthly considerations could induce him to concede this right, or forego its exercise for a moment: and he was as delicate and cautious of encroaching on this right in others, as he was resolute in maintaining it for himself

As a Minister of the Gospel, his qualifications were of the highest order. His moral feelings were pure, elevated, discriminating, delicate, consistent; his piety was rational, deep, heart-felt, operative—it moulded his whole character, and gave the tone and tenor to the whole course of his life and conversation. His views of the divine character and government, were liberal, consoling and delightful; he seemed habitually to regard the Deity as the Father of the Universe, with sentiments of the deepest reverence and humility—yet joyous, confiding, filial. He delighted to contemplate in the events of life in all the minute, as well as more important concerns of men, the operations of a wise and benificent Providence, "from seeming evil still educing good." This contemplation was to him an unfailing source of consolation and support, in circumstances trying and afflictive, in no ordinary degree.

His public discourses were serious, practical, and impressive. He dwelt much on the peculiar character of the gospel dispensation on the purity, excellence, consistency and practicableness of its morality; on the importance of the truths it reveals, the solemn and powerful monitions it presents, and the glorious prospect it opens to the pure and upright in heart. He strongly insisted on the necessity of vital piety and practical godliness; and the utter worthlessness of all speculations, principles, and professions, unaccompanied by these. To the commands and example of Jesus his hearers were constantly referred, for the standard of their faith, and the pattern of their conduct.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Communication through the Post-Office, respecting "Two Articles of Professor Stuart's Creed," has been received, but is necessarily laid by for the present

We regret that we have not room for L. C. He will perceive that the department, in which his Communication should be inserted, has been unavoidably straitened.

"The account of the St. Thomé Christians." "*To Farmers:*" "*Eusebia:*" shall have early attention.

"*Viator*" is received and has our thanks. We shall be glad to avail ourselves, as occasion may offer, of his hints. He may perceive from the aspect of the present number that some of his apprehensions are groundless. We do not mean to be unfaithful to our friends at home or abroad.

Several Obituary Notices are omitted for want of room.

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

NEW SERIES—No. 8.

For March and April, 1820.

SPRING—THE SUN AN EMBLEM OF GOD.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

"The winter is now over, and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." He, who openeth his hand and filleth all things with plenteousness, is renewing the face of the earth. "The earth, by an annual miracle, rises again, as from her grave, in life and beauty." All things invite your adoration. The sun with its increasing heat, gently smiles upon that infant creation, which it has so lately warmed into being, presenting a striking emblem of the God, whose presence is the light of the universe, and whose smile is the happiness of his children. Let us remark upon the similitude. First, its *light*, or *lustre*. You can hardly wonder that the heathen, who worshipped the sun, should mistake so fair a copy for the bright original. Its light reveals all that you see. Without it, creation around you would be blank and lifeless; and that which is now so fresh and fair, would be covered in an undistinguished gloom. No plains would be seen dressed with flowers; no fields waving with the harvest; no guide in your walks; no comfort in your lives. With it, every thing is grand and beautiful. Remember then, when you go abroad, that the glory, and greatness of the Almighty are no less conspicuous. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy work. His praise is written as with a sunbeam upon every object in nature. Not a wave rolls in the ocean; not a plant shoots up in the wilderness; not a star twinkles in the sky, which does not declare his greatness. It is he who has bowed the heavens, and come down in the revelation of his Son; made a clear discovery of

your duty; become a light to your feet, a guide to your steps through this world of danger, and, at last, illuminated the grave you so much dread, with the light of immortality you so much desire.

We next speak of the *agency* of the sun. In the season that is approaching, you will be constant witnesses of this agency. The powers of nature would slumber forever, was not this great enlivening principle appointed to awaken them into action. There is nothing hid from its heat. But should it be withheld, the utmost ruin would ensue; the trees would no longer put forth their leaves; the grass would no longer clothe the ground, and the earth no longer furnish out its stores for your support. The animal, as well as the vegetable kingdom, would die; for "no longer would the fig tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive would fail, and the fields would yield no meat; the flocks would be cut off from the folds, and there would be no herd in the stalls." But with it, none of these evils need be feared. All is flourishing and full. Its all pervading efficacy is felt every hour, from the first opening bud in spring, to the last ripening fruit in autumn. So, be it remembered, do the all-supporting power, and the all-encircling goodness of God, uphold and enliven all that he has made. Every display of excellence, and every richness of bounty, every effort of the mind, and every affection of the heart, are to be referred to him, as their first source, and moving cause. Every thing is full of him. All motion, and life, and happiness are but the effects of his universal agency. "In him we live, and move, and have our being."

We would ask you to notice next, that the sun diffuses a *general, equal influence.* No one of you gets more than your neighbour; there is no partiality in its distributions. To every distance, in every direction, it sends its invigorating beams. It does not select one field, and pour all its genial warmth upon that, making it rich and fruitful; and leave the next to the continual chill of winter. No; it causes the seed to spring up, the leaves to put forth, and the fruit to ripen in your neighbour's ground, as in your own. Every spot, and every region about you, has a proportionate share, and feels its permanent efficacy. It may produce greater effects in one place than in another, according to varying circumstances; yet its influence, so far as it regards itself, is not momentary, is not partial; but steady, equal, general. So it is with God. Your heavenly Father looks equally upon all his children, and looks in mercy too. The influences of his spirit, are steady, equal, general. As you can hide yourselves from the light of the sun, so you may hide your-

selves from the kind influences of God's grace. The fault here lies with yourself alone. God is equally every where, and every where good; always ready to bless, when you would ask a blessing. Should you, in faith, ascend into heaven, you would find him there, and find him merciful. Should you take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, you would find him there, and find him merciful. He has caused the sun of righteousness to arise, and its gracious influences are unconfined. It does not elect one of you, and pour all its benignant power upon you alone, leaving your neighbour without a ray of its glory. No. You have it in common with others. It is given to shine upon one as it does upon another. Each one can feel its energy. Each one may be cheered by its warmth through the pilgrimage of life, and each be guided by its light to the very gate of heaven.

The last similitude we shall mention, is the *cheerfulness* brought by the sun. What more joyous than to see "the morning spread upon the mountains?" to see the solitary place made glad, and the desert made to rejoice? The sun seems to bring "glad tidings." Every voice speaks gratitude; every eye sparkles with delight, and every heart expands with benevolence. You, who are amidst the glories of creation, let these scenes awaken your minds to thought, and make your souls happy. May you remember, that the general joy around you is but a faint testimony of the goodness and love of God. A goodness, and a love, which pervade things you cannot see, and which flow on forever. A goodness, which all this rich eloquence of nature cannot show forth, which man's utmost powers cannot estimate, which the heaven of heavens cannot contain, which began with his being, and which will be consummate with his immortality.

RUSTICUS.

ACCOUNT OF THE ST. THOME CHRISTIANS.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

IN the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese adventurers, enthusiastic to extend their military glory and propagate their religious faith, discovered a body of Christians near the Malabar coast. They were retired within the mountains, withdrawn from intercourse, for a long time, with any Christian nation; exhibiting a distinct, original character, and quietly enjoying peculiar civil and religious privileges. This singular peo-

ple were rich and happy; amounting in number to one hundred and fifty thousand, and possessing one hundred and ten churches, built after the manner of those in Judea, in the days of the apostles. In these, they regularly worshipped the God of their fathers with the spirit of faith, in gratitude and in Christian obedience. They appeared to reverence God and love one another. Here, then, seemed to be pure Christianity. All traditions and all the Malabar records agree, that these Christians had been known and settled there long before either the Arabs or the Jews; and they yet use the Syrian or Chaldee language in their religious offices. Their records carry us back to four hundred and twenty years after Christ. The rest is uncertain. There was a tradition, that St. Thomas the apostle was the founder of this sect; as he preached, they say, in India, and suffered martyrdom at Maliapoor, now St. Thomé. They were governed by a patriarch, or elder, or, as we will call him, a bishop, who was always styled *Mar Thomé*, when chosen to this high station, in compliment to that person, who is said to have been their great founder, and first chief, or bishop. This bishop was strictly obeyed in civil and ecclesiastical matters, being a person distinguished for learning and goodness. In civil cases he appointed arbitrators or judges, whose decision was final; but they never condemned any brother to death. They were remarkable for neatness and abstinence. Their weddings were celebrated with great profusion and show. Husbandry was their principal occupation. Their attachment to the Sacred Scriptures was astonishing, for they believed they had them as they came from the hands of the apostles.

This was the happy situation of this favoured people, at the arrival of the Portuguese in India. The exultation of these visitors at the discovery of the St. Thomé Christians,was momentary; for they found that they did not acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope of Rome! This was enough, if nothing more, to rouse the resentment of bigoted invaders. Every resourse was exhausted to reclaim these forlorn sons to the bosom of the church of Rome. Mild and conciliatory means, however, proved fruitless, and never would they have succeeded, so steadfast did the St. Thomé Christians adhere to their faith, unless open force had been employed. Their ruling Bishop, Joseph, [Mar Thomé] living in one of their villages, called Angamalee, being induced neither by bribes nor menaces to acknowledge the Pope, was seized and sent to Rome. The St. Thomé Christians soon obtained another, Abraham. Joseph, by some means, persuaded his accusers, that he had come over to their faith, and was accordingly sent back; but on his return declared his adherence to his for-

mer opinions with redoubled firmness. Difficulties occurring, Abraham was seized by the same authority; (viz. by an Archbishop from the Mother Church at Rome, appointed to reside near them,) and he saved his life, as did Joseph; and returned to his friends and to his charge. Joseph, however, had been apprehended a second time and carried to Rome, where he died, stating in his papers his unwavering faith in the tenets of the St. Thomé Christians. Abraham lived to a very old age, and before his death expressed with great decision his abhorrence of the innovations of the Popish religion.

After the death of Abraham, the Roman Catholic Archbishop Menezes, appointed a Jesuit to fill the vacant seat at Angamalee. But all to no purpose; the St. Thomé Christians would not acknowledge him; and elected a person, George, who should serve till a Bishop could be procured in the usual manner. This obstinate firmness on the part of these Christians induced Menezes to visit them in person. The appearance of a man of his birth and wealth, full of zeal and devotion, as primate of India, was decisive. George employed every subterfuge, which his natural sagacity and attachment to his sect could suggest; but he could not oppose the bold, indefatigable spirit of Menezes, who, supported by the Portuguese, called a council or synod at Odiamper, near Cochin, and assembled most of the St. Thomé Priests, and four elders from each village. After some explanation of the tenets of the Church of Rome, Menezes proceeded to dictate the law to them; and they not daring openly to oppose, were apparently united to the Roman Church. But the union was neither general, nor sincere, nor lasting. One circumstance connected with this treacherous council, we must not overlook. "We can never," says the historian, "sufficiently lament the loss, which literature, sacred and classical, sustained here—for this blind and enthusiastic inquisitor, destroyed, like a second Omar, all the books written in the Syrian or Chaldean languages, which could be collected, not only at the synod of Odiamper, but especially during his subsequent circuit; for as soon as he had entered into a Syrian church, he ordered all their books and records to be laid before him, which *he committed to the flames;* so that at present, neither books or manuscripts are any more to be found among the St. Thomé Christians." This was a death blow to their improvements, and it broke down the spirit of this quiet people. Soon, too, was overturned that wholesome political system established by Perumal, and an oppressive despotism took the place of a mild limited oligarchy. The consequences which followed to the faithful St. Thomé Christians, need only be hinted at. During the disturbances among them, connected with

those of the Hindoos, Portuguese, Dutch, and the less and greater Rajahs about Cochin and Travancore, they were the sport of superior and oppressing powers; and about thirty years since, Tippoo's bigoted fanaticism doomed every thing to destruction, by a general conflagration of all the Hindoo temples, and Christian villages. The few inhabitants who remain, are in a state of abject misery.

How different the situation of this people in former times, from the wretched condition in which they now appear; scarcely able to erect a cadjan shed, for their religious meetings, over the splendid ruins, which attest, at the same moment, their former wealth and their present poverty!

And why are these once peaceful retreats thus rudely spoiled? why is the traveller, while he approaches these vallies, to stop and listen, in vain, for the sound of Christian bells; and look in vain for that happy people who are called by them, to the house of prayer? The prominent reason is, that the St. Thomé Christians were not of the same sect with their bigoted invaders. The pure light of truth, which had illuminated every step of their progress from the earliest days of Christianity, was not deemed genuine orthodoxy by the church of Rome. These humble Christians of the mountains were Unitarians. "They rejected the Deity of Jesus Christ, and called the Virgin Mary the mother of Christ, not the mother of God. They also maintained that the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father; and not from the Father and the Son. They admitted no images of saints into their churches, where the holy cross only was to be seen. They had only three sacraments, Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Orders; and would not admit transubstantiation in any manner with the Roman Catholics. They knew nothing of purgatory; and their priests were permitted to marry."

Y.

TWO ARTICLES OF PROFESSOR STUART'S CREED.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

I. "The Son possesses not simply a *similar* or *equal* essence and perfections, but *numerically* THE SAME as the Father."

II. "The Son does in some respect, *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally, or logically, DIFFER from the Father."

STUART'S LETTERS.

CAN one body, then, be another? can bread be flesh? or can snow be fire? Unless even this be possible, it is not possible

that the Son should possess numerically the same essence and perfections as the Father; for if one could possess numerically the same essence and perfection as another, then one could be another; or one could be two; and if two, why not six, or ten? If, for the belief of this, you need any of the aids of authority, read the following extracts from Edwards on the Will. "That determination of a thing, which is not different in any respect, is not a different determination, but the same."—"These two different bodies are not different, or distinct in any other respects than those wherein they *differ:* they are two in no other respects than those wherein there is a difference. If they are perfectly equal and alike *in themselves*, then they can be distinguished, or be distinct, only by those things which are called *circumstances;* as place, time, rest, motion, or some other present or past circumstances or relations. For it is difference only that constitutes distinction. If God makes two bodies, *in themselves*, every way equal and alike, and agreeing perfectly in all other circumstances and relations, but only their *place;* then in this only is their any distinction, or duplicity." "Suppose that God had placed them" (two spheres perfectly alike both in themselves and in their circumstances, excepting only their place) "one towards the right hand, and the other towards the left; and it should be asked, why God placed them so? why that which is made on the right hand was not made on the left, and *vice versa?* Let it be well considered, whether there be any sense in such a question? and whether the inquiry does not suppose something false and absurd. Let it be considered, what the Creator must have done otherwise than he did, what different act of will or power he must have exerted, in order to the thing proposed. All that could have been done, would have been to have made two spheres, perfectly alike, in the same places where he has made them, without any difference in the thing made, either in themselves, or in any circumstances; so that the whole effect would have been without any difference, and, therefore, just the same."—"If, in the instance of two spheres, perfectly alike, it be supposed possible that God might have made them in a contrary position; that which is made at the right hand, being made at the left, then I ask, whether it is not evidently equally possible that, if God had made but one of them, and that in the place of the right hand globe, that he might have made that numerically different from what he did make it, though perfectly alike, and in the same place; and at the same time and in every respect, in the same circumsances and relations?"

President Edwards then, must, as well as we, maintain that the assertion that "the Son possesses numerically the same essence

and perfections as the Father," is the contradiction, that the Son is the Father. Than this the contradictions are not more palpable, that you are a son and not a son; or a father and not a father; or a scholar and not a scholar; or a christian and not a christian. If the son possesses numerically the same essence and perfections as the Father, then, Father and Son are, not correlative, but identical terms; and, as the former signifies the only self-existent Parent, the latter will signify the same. Will not people, then, begin to say that, though there is but one self-existent parent, there yet are two? and yet none? for surely there can be no parent, when there is no offspring. Will they not also begin to say that there is a Father, who, having no son, is not a Father; and also that there is a son, who, having no Father, is not a Son? such, at any rate, would be a natural result of a mixture of this novel with the common signification of the terms Father and Son. If the Son possesses numerically the same essence and perfections as the Father, the Father must possess numerically the same essence and perfections as the Son; and hence all the power in heaven and in earth which was *given* to the Son, was also given to the Father, though he himself gave it; and, as the Son hath power to do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do, the Father hath power to do nothing of himself, but what he seeth himself do; and, as the Son had power to lay down his life, the Father, though the king immortal, had power to lay down his life; and as the Son, addressing his brethren, had power to say, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;" so the Father, though he had no brethren, and can have none, yet addressing them, had power to say, I ascend to myself, and your ———! What a farrago must the notion here opposed make of the scriptures? and what a luxury must it give to infidels?

This notion, however, is not more opposite to the scriptures than it is to the orthodox. These have long held that the Father and Son were two distinct persons, not the *same*, but "*equal* in power and glory;" each possessing a distinct consciousness, perception, and will; and each "able to understand, to will, and to act, as a free, voluntary, almighty agent;" and this consideration is essential to their fundamental doctrines of compacts, covenants, or atonement. For it is impossible that there should be a compact or covenant made, where there is but one person, or one agent, or numerically the same essence and perfections; and it is not less impossible that, in consequence of such impossible compact, or covenant, the Son, having the same essence and perfections as the Father—and hence having the same will, the same perception, and the same consciousness, and being the same

person or agent as the Father—should, by shedding his blood on the cross, make the great atonement, and appease the wrath of the Father. He, therefore, who holds that the Son possesses 'numerically the same essence and perfections as the Father,' tears up by the root the great tree of orthodox Theology; and he leaves not one fibre from which can grow even that limb of it, which gives to the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ the whole of its orthodox sweetness.

But neither to the scriptures, nor to the orthodox is this notion more opposite, than it is to the assertion, that "the Son does in some respect, *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally or logically, DIFFER from the Father." For he, who "*truly* and *really*, not merely nominally or logically, differs" from another, cannot possess numerically *the same essence and perfections* as that other, any more than paper can possess numerically the same essence and perfections as silver; or than water can possess numerically the same essence and perfections as powder. He, therefore, who, though maintaining that the Son possesses numerically the same essence and perfections as the Father, yet maintains that the Son does in some respects, *truly* and *really* differ from the Father, and that hence there is a *distinction* in the godhead, acts wisely when he says, "*I abjure all attempts to define it.*" For it would not be easy to define a distinction which does not exist; though not harder than to descry a distinction where there is no difference; or than to destroy the distinction between difference and sameness.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

ON THE CHARACTER AND CONVERSION OF PAUL.

[In a Letter.]

REV. SIR,

I SOMETIME since received a line from you, enclosing a very long letter on the character of St. Paul before his conversion, and the nature of that conversion.

I have read your remarks with candour and attention, but I can find nothing which has the appearance of proof, that the change, experienced by Paul, when on his way to Damascus, or while there, was from a state of "enmity and impenitence," according to the general acceptation of those terms; nor do I find any thing which satisfactorily proves, that the ideas I advanced on this subject, are not warranted by the testimony of scripture.

In regard to many particulars in the character of Paul, anterior to his conversion, there can be no dispute; that he was of Jewish extraction; of the sect of the pharisees; a man of superior powers of mind; and well acquainted with the writings of Moses and the prophets. But I am far from believing with you, that "his own declarations warrant us in considering him, antecedent to his conversion, as a blind, bigoted, self-righteous pharisee, well acquainted with the letter of the divine law, but totally ignorant of its real requirements and spiritual extent, consequently that he was unacquainted with the state of his own heart, and the real character of his life." In confirmation of this belief, you quote Romans vii. 9. "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." From this passage you draw this sweeping inference, "we have the plain, explicit, and solemn confession of Paul himself, that, before his conversion, he was a blind, impenitent, self-righteous, and self-confident sinner."

It would be taking up too much time to answer separately the numerous questions you have proposed, relative to the above-mentioned passage. I think you must find them all satisfactorily answered by the pious and learned Dr. Doddridge's exposition of that passage, and his note upon it, where he says, "the apostle here, by a very dexterous turn, changes the persons and speaks as of himself. This he elsewhere does, when he is only personating another character. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the confirmed christian that he really was when he wrote this Epistle, is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse." With the light thrown upon the words, "I was alive without the law once," &c. by the learned Doctor, I presume you must be satisfied of the impropriety of drawing an inference so unfavourable to the character of Paul, when he only personated another.

The next passage, which you quote to prove that Paul was a great sinner, previous to his vision on his way to Damascus, is found in his first Epistle to Timothy, i. 15, 16. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of *whom I am chief*," &c. This passage, I think, is as little to your purpose, as the former. If you turn to the Greek of this passage, you will find the part on which you lay the greatest stress, to read ὧν πρῶτος εἰμι ἐγω; which may very well be translated, "of whom I am chief," if we refer the word *chief*, not to *sinners*, but to *the exercise of mercy;* and to this the present time of the verb "*am*" seems necessarily to restrain it, unless we suppose Paul to be the chief of sinners *after* his conversion, as the passage would necessarily imply according

to your construction. If you review the passage, you will find, that the word, now translated "*chief*," might very properly be rendered "*first*," as it is in that part of the next verse, which you omitted, "that in me *first*," πρωτῳ, (the same original word which is translated "chief" in the verse above) "that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering," &c. And how was it that in him "*first*" Jesus Christ shewed this pattern of long-suffering, but as he was one of the "*first*" instances of a zealous opposer of the christian faith, becoming a professor of it, and a champion for it?*

Your next quotation is from the first Epistle to the Corinthians, xv. 8, 9. "And last of all he (meaning Christ) was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time," &c. After the most careful examination, I cannot learn how this passage proves St. Paul to have been a scandalous sinner previous to his conversion, any more than the other passages which relate to the resurrection of our Saviour.

In the context you will find that the apostle reminds the Corinthians of what he had before preached to them; "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures;" and then, in confirmation of his resurrection, he asserts, "that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; after that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles; and last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time, for I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

What is the general, or particular scope of this passage, but to confirm the Corinthians in the belief that Jesus Christ was indeed risen from the dead, a doctrine very intimately connected with their hope of salvation? If you urge, that the latter part of it alludes to the time of St. Paul's conversion, I would observe that it alludes *only* to the *time*, not to the *nature* of it; whether it was from sin to holiness, or only from Judaism to Christianity.

But that the latter of these was really the case, I think may be fairly deduced from what is said in the ninth chapter of the Acts of the apostles by the historian, and in the twenty-second and twenty-sixth chapters by St. Paul himself, where we find circumstantial accounts of the *manner* of his conversion: and the *manner* I think to be the only criterion by which we can form a correct idea of its true *nature*. From these several chapters you have quoted passages which relate to his persecution, and which exhibit only the dark side of the apostle's character while he was

* See Henry Grove's Discourse on St. Paul's Conversion.

in unbelief. That he persecuted the church of God, he frankly confesses; but at the same time, he mentions the cause of this conduct towards the Christians; that "he *verily thought* he OUGHT to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth;" that it was out of zeal towards God; and that in the whole course of his life he had maintained "a conscience void of offence towards God and man;" which, though it does not clear him from the charge of having done wrong, yet, I think, fairly acquits him of being "a most *malicious* persecutor." His being a persecutor proves the force of prejudice, and the dangerous tendency of false zeal; but not malice of thought, nor corruption of heart. It proves how liable men, even of talents and integrity, are to fall into error, both in faith and practice. Nor is St. Paul a solitary instance of the kind. How many, educated under the milder dispensation of the gospel, have been guilty of those cruelties, which would receive some palliation under the Mosaic dispensation? John Calvin might be mentioned as a striking instance. The prevalence of opinion, and especially the opinions of those who are esteemed superiors, will always have a powerful influence upon the minds of men. Calvin, though educated in the Christian religion, which strictly prohibits every species of persecution, yet lived in an age when persecution was prevalent; and the prevalence of the practice in his age, of destroying, in the most awful manner, the lives of heretics, is, I think, the only palliation of his cruelties towards Servetus.—And may not something more be said in extenuation of Paul's guilt in persecuting the Christian church? Persecution is the only crime of which we find him guilty; in all other things he "had maintained a conscience void of offence," and even in this, his conscience did not reproach him with the commission of sin through malice and design; for he says he obtained mercy, because he did it "ignorantly and in unbelief," and "verily thought he ought to do" these things. He might be induced by his prejudices in favour of the Jewish religion, in which he had been educated, and of which he was a strict observer; by the prevalence of opinion, (he being young) and by the example of those whom he esteemed his superiors; I say, he might be betrayed by these into some great errors both in belief and practice; but these errors might still be consistent with piety and integrity in him as well as in Calvin. In confirmation of this, let us consider that, by the law of Moses, persons guilty of blasphemy against God, were to be put to death; and that the great council of the Jewish nation (composed of older, and, as he thought, of wiser persons than himself) had publicly condemned Christ as a blasphemer. and procured his crucifixion by the Romans. These facts will easily account for

his being betrayed into an error concerning christianity; and by those natural prejudices in favour of the religion of his fathers, and by some plausible objections against christianity from the chief men of the nation, he might be prevailed upon to conclude it was an imposture, and to treat it as such. I do not offer this to justify his conduct towards the christians, but only to shew, that he might possibly fall into this error both in belief and practice, as other good men have fallen into great sins, and yet be a good man.—And if this be possible, we have reason to think from other considerations, that it was actually the case. Take what he says of himself in the full acceptation of the words (and you will observe they are his words after his conversion, when he would surely tell the truth) "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (Acts xxiii. 1.) How could this be said of any but a truly upright man? Or where is the man on earth, even the best christian, that can say more of himself? His meaning doubtless is, that in his general conversation he had been a man of veracity and integrity, who was conscientious in what he said and did. This construction would give a peculiar force to his apology before the Jewish council, and without this, his apology will hardly wear the appearance of truth. He mentions his life, and the manner in which he had always lived, as a very fit introduction to his apology; he reminds his accusers, who were acquainted with his life before his conversion, that he had never forfeited the character of an upright, conscientious man; he does not tell them to believe him, because he had been a great sinner, which in our days is frequently made a kind of passport to favour; but because his general character entitled him to belief. He appeals to them, whether he had not always maintained a regard to conscience and the obligations of the religion of his fathers. If he had been such a gross and scandalous sinner as some represent him before his conversion, how could this be reconciled with his own declaration after it, when he says, "that he had been blameless, as touching the righteousness of the law, and that he had lived in all good conscience before God."

In regard to the next passage which you quote, 1 Timothy i. 12, 13, where he acknowledges that he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," I would only observe, that these were sins for which, he says, he "obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly and in unbelief." He was a blasphemer, not of the name of God; this would contradict his assertion that "he had been blameless as touching the righteousness of the law;" for the law prohibited this sin under the penalty of death. But owing

to mistaken notions of Christ as the promised Messiah, he spake *reproachfully* of him and his followers. This, according to the original meaning of the term, is blasphemy. It is true, according to the present general acceptation of the term, blasphemy is an indignity offered to God, but the word is used in a different sense in scripture. And when applied to men, others as well as Paul may commit this sin, when they think they are doing God service. To reproach or revile another, or to impute guilt without any justifiable grounds, either by positive declarations, or base comparisons, is a species of blasphemy. And I think, that to compare such a character as Paul declares himself to have been before his conversion, with a Nero, a Judas Iscariot, a Voltaire, and a Thomas Paine, would fall but little short of the kind of blasphemy, of which Paul acknowledges himself guilty.

Leaving then these passages of scripture, I have always regarded it as a circumstance in favour of Paul's character before his conversion, that he was a Pharisee; and I still think that this, in connexion with what he says of himself, is sufficient proof of his piety and integrity.

It is true, our Saviour speaks of the Pharisees in very strong terms of disapprobation; but perhaps it may be well to inquire, whether his language was not levelled particularly against the *leaders* of that sect, who were proud, covetous, and hypocritical, and did what they did to be seen of men; and not against those who lived in all good conscience before God. At the time when our Saviour was on earth, the body of the Jewish people were divided into two great sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The former were very strict in their observance of the Jewish ritual, and excepting some of the leaders, who were grossly hypocritical, they were pious; and under a belief of a future state of retribution they performed the great duties required by that dispensation under which providence had placed them. The latter were more loose in their principles and practice, and disbelieving a future existence, they gave themselves up to a dissolute and impious life. Now if God had a church among the Jews, to which if these sects did it belong? And if he had any true children in his church, where shall we find them, if not among the number of those, who, "as touching the righteousness of the law were blameless, and who lived in all good conscience before God?" Notwithstanding all aspersions, such Paul declares himself to have been before his conversion.

Persecution was the only crime that tarnished his character, and even this, under the influence of that charity and candour which christianity inspires, has a great palliation. His guilt loses its blackness when we recollect the goodness of design; and who

would not forget the indiscretion of his youth, when it was only the effect of a wrong education, and his zeal for God?

For the reasons, which I have now very imperfectly laid before you, I have entertained a very favourable opinion of the moral character of Paul before his conversion, as being a man of conscientious integrity and piety; and have drawn, as a natural inference concerning the *nature* of his conversion, that it was from Judaism to Christianity; not from sin to holiness, any further than his belief in the gospel had effect upon his conduct towards it. And this inference I think to be fully warranted by his own account of the *manner* in which it was effected.

In the ix. xxii. and xxvi. chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, we have particular accounts of St. Paul's conversion, and of the *manner* in which it was effected; and this I conceive to be our only guide to the true *nature* of it. A very brief summary of the history, as related by himself and the historian, is, that as he was journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus, he saw an unusual light shining from heaven, accompanied with a voice reproving him for his persecution; after ascertaining that it was Jesus who spake to him, he immediately inquired, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Being divinely directed, he was conducted into Damascus; he there remained three days blind, and then miraculously received his sight: he was then baptized, and filled with the Holy Ghost, as the other Apostles were, to qualify him for his office, and "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues."

This is a brief summary of the manner of St. Paul's conversion; and is it not very observable, that the means used to effect it were wholly *external?* calculated to do away his prejudices, to convince his understanding, and to force conviction upon his mind, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, by evidence which could not be resisted?

As the means used for his conversion were external, they were visibly adapted to answer their end; this is according to the ordinary methods of divine providence, and visible in all the works of God. He adapts the means to the end, and the cause produces its proper effect. If, then, by the conversion of St. Paul, we suppose a change from Judaism to Christianity, the means were admirably adapted to the end; for nothing could be better fitted to awaken a man blinded by his prejudices, and to force him to serious consideration, than the method here taken. What happened to him was an undeniable proof that he was in an error. He had a sensible demonstration that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, because he spake to him from thence. With this also agreed all the other circumstances of this wonderful event. Having reflected upon the va-

rious circumstances, he must necessarily be convinced of what, till then, his prejudices made him think incredible, that Jesus Christ, whom he persecuted, was the promised Messiah. And from this time we find his notions were changed, and his zeal differently directed; he was now as solicitous to build up Christianity, as he had been before to support Judaism; he had been zealous towards God in the Jewish religion; he now "laboured more abundantly" than all the other Apostles in the Christian religion. We find the same traits of activity and zeal in both; and though he had once "verily thought in himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," we now find that he was equally sincere in the belief, that he ought to serve God, not only as a Christian, but as an Apostle and teacher of Christianity. What then is the necessary conclusion, but that St. Paul's conversion was only from error to truth, or from Judaism to Christianity; because the manner in which it was effected, was exactly suited to this end; and his conduct before and after that event, exhibited equal traits of sincerity and zeal towards God?*

Such are my views of the character of St. Paul before his conversion, and of the nature of that change.

Z. H.

ON THE NECESSITY OF THE STUDY OF NATURAL THEOLOGY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

In the popular work of Dr. Chalmers on the "Evidence and Authority of the Christian Revelation," principles are assumed and defended, which, if true, render the study of Natural Theology an unnecessary and unphilosophical employment. "Of the invisible God," he says, "we have no *experience* whatever—*no direct and personal observation of him or his counsels.*"†—"We cannot" therefore "reason on the procedure of the Almighty in given circumstances. This is an inaccessible subject, and comes not within the limits of *direct and personal observation.*"‡ All attempts at such reasoning are consequently condemned as "the follies of a rash and fanciful speculation"§—"this man's taste, or

* See Henry Grove's Sermons upon the manner of Paul's conversion.

† Page 14.—The references are made to the American Edition of Dr. C.'s work, printed at Philadelphia.

‡ p. 178. § p. 196.

that man's fancy*"—"of no more value than the fooleries of an infant."†—"It is the part of reason," he says, "to form its conclusions when it has data and evidences before it. But it is equally the part of reason to abstain from its conclusions, when these evidences are wanting. Reason can judge of the external evidences of Christianity—but is not entitled to sit in judgment over those internal evidences, which many a *presumptuous* theologian has attempted to derive from the reason of the thing, or from the agreement of the doctrine with the *fancied* character and attributes of the Deity."‡—"Enough for us to have established the authority of the Christian revelation upon the ground of its historical evidence. All that remains is to submit our minds to the fair interpretation of scripture."‖ He admits, however, all that kind of internal evidence, which arises from marks of honesty and integrity in the original witnesses; and upon this, together with the authenticity of its historical record, and the fact that miracles were actually wrought in attestation of its truth, he "exclusively" rests the authority of revelation.§ And "in thus disclaiming all support from what is commonly understood by the internal evidence," he thinks he does a signal service to Christianity. For "it renders all that discussion, which, in the Deistical controversy, is by Leland and others expended upon the reasonableness of the doctrines, superfluous and uncalled for."¶—"Yes—but how do you dispose of the objection drawn from the light of natural religion? In precisely the same way," he replies, "that we would dispose of an objection drawn from some speculative system, against the truth of any physical fact that has been well established by observation or testimony. We would [should] disown the system, and oppose the obstinacy of fact to all the elegance and ingenuity of the speculation."**—"Another course," he owns, "would be all very fair, were there no Bible and no revelation in existence. But God has put an authoritative stop to all this. He has spoken, and the right or the liberty of speculation no longer remains to us. The question now is, not 'What thinkest thou?' In the days of Pagan antiquity no other question could be put.—But we call ourselves Christians, and profess to receive the Bible as the directory of our faith, and the only question in which we are concerned is 'What is written in the law? how readest thou?'"††—"The study of divinity," therefore, he would have "looked upon as a mere work of translation, to which we are to sit down like a school boy to his task"—and that, not only "with the docility of a child," but with no aids but those of a

* p. 223. † p. 236. ‡ p. 233. ‖ p. 205. § p. 176. ¶ p. 179.
** p. 205. †† p. 222.

child—"a grammar and lexicon."*—"Then," he tells us, "we would [might] expect the same unanimity among Christians, that we meet with among scholars and literati about the system of Epicurus, or the Philosophy of Aristotle."†—"He" next "calls upon every *enlightened* disciple of lord Bacon to approve the steps of this process."‡—"All he wants is, the application of lord Bacon's principles to the investigation before us."§—"The argument of the Christian," as he proposes it, "is precisely what the maxims of lord Bacon would dispose us to acquiesce in."‖ He disclaims every method but his own, "not," as he repeatedly assures us, "because it is impious—but because it is unphilosophical—for the beings of a day to sit in judgment upon the eternal, and apply their paltry experience to the counsels of his high and unfathomable wisdom."¶—And lest in the course of nearly a hundred pages, or more than a third part of his whole book, devoted to this topick, his opinion of the perfect uselessness of Natural Theology should by any possibility escape us, he has given an entire chapter to "the way of proposing the argument to atheistical infidels," in which he does not startle to avow the direct, but one would think fearful, consequence of his system—that "he looks upon the neutral mind of an atheist, who is wholly unoccupied by pre-conceptions, and who sees nothing in the phenomena around him, that can warrant him to believe in the existence of a living and intelligent principle which gave birth and movement to all things—as in a better state of preparation for the proofs of Christianity, than the mind of an infidel, who believes in the existence of God!"**

These are the views of Dr. Chalmers respecting the value of Natural Theology, given, for the most part, in his own words. They are consistent with no opinion, but that of its utter vanity and worthlessness. But to renounce Natural Religion is so far from being, as the writer imagines, a necessary step towards establishing Revealed, that it seems to me to remove the very basis upon which all religion rests. In answer to Dr. Chalmers, I shall attempt to show—the validity of the natural argument for the existence and character of God—and that the necessity of resorting to it is not superseded by the summary method of proposing the historical evidences of Christianity which he has adopted.

Natural Theology is the knowledge of God derived from the moral and physical phenomena within and around us. In arriving at this knowledge, we presuppose three principles to be incontrovertible; and upon these the whole science is built. But

* p. 225, 246. † p. 225. ‡ p. 246. § p. 186. ‖ p. 200. ¶ p. 192, 260, &c.
** Look at the whole of his ixth Chapter.

since they are all directly or indirectly disputed in the work mentioned above, they must be stated and defended, though I am aware it will involve a formal assertion of what none but the thorough skeptick denies, and an attempt to prove what all, but those who think with Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Hume, consider self-evident.

The first of these principles is—"Whatever begins to exist must have a cause which produced it." According to Dr. Reid, Mr. Hume was the first who ever formally called this in question. But in the sketch of the inductive philosophy drawn by Dr. Chalmers, *experience*, we are told, is the only legitimate source of knowledge—without the evidence of experience we are to admit nothing. And it is impossible to make his reasonings at all consistent, or even intelligible, unless we understand him as employing the word in its strict, philosophical sense. But from experience in this sense, to learn, that whatever begins to exist must have a cause, is impossible. In making this appear, I shall use principally the arguments so often employed against Mr. Hume.

Though experience may inform us of the constancy of those laws which regulate the changes in the world around us, it can never discover to us those connexions of things, which are in their nature necessary. The three angles of a triangle, we know, are together equal to two right ones. We know moreover that it cannot be otherwise. It is a necessary truth. But do we come to this result, because we have observed triangles are always made exactly of these dimensions? Do we obtain this knowledge from experience? So with the principle we are examining. It is a necessary truth. Though we had all the experimental proof imaginable, that whatever has begun to exist had a cause, we could not infer, from this alone, that it *must* have had a cause, or that it could never have existed without one.

Besides, all propositions that depend for their proof upon experience, ought to be so received as to admit of exceptions, should further experiments discover any. That a stone thrown into the air will fall to the earth, is a proposition of this kind, the truth of which depends upon a law that has an inductive proof as ample as we can well conceive. Yet should a substance be discovered, which does not gravitate (and it is evidently not *absurd* to say there may), this law must be stated with that exception. But with respect to the necessity of causes, no such limitation was ever regarded as possible in the nature of things. Mankind, therefore, have not received these two principles upon the same kind of evidence.

"Causation," says Dr. Reid, "is not an object of sense. The only experience we have of it, is in the consciousness we have of

exerting power in ordering our thoughts and actions. But this experience is surely of too narrow a foundation for a general conclusion, that all things that have had or shall have a beginning, must have a cause."

"In the way of abstract reasoning," says the same philosopher, "I know only of three or four arguments that have been urged to prove this point. And in my opinion they have all been shown by Mr. Hume to take for granted the thing to be proved."

If then it depends for its evidence neither upon experience nor abstract reasoning, we must either reject it as we would "any other nonentity of the imagination," to use the language of Dr. Chalmers, or admit it as a first and self-evident principle. To reject it, would be to annihilate all philosophy as well as all Natural Theology, and put an end to all reasoning. But in favour of considering it a fundamental principle of human belief, we can urge the consent of all mankind, both in speculation and in practice, except Mr. Hume, and perhaps Dr. Chalmers. "Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas," says Dr. Reid, "is the universal sense of men; but to say any thing can happen without a cause, shocks the common sense of a savage." When a treasure is sought for without being found in the place where it is remembered to have been deposited, the first reflection in every man's mind is, that it could not have gone without hands. This reflection forces itself upon his mind irresistibly, and without any concurring effort of his own. Besides, to what have not men resorted to account for the origin of things? Chance, necessity, a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and a thousand things equally absurd, have each in their turn been proposed as the solution of this great problem; while not a man, before the two just mentioned, ever thought of removing the difficulty by putting the previous question, whether they had a cause or not.

We may therefore safely conclude, that the proposition under consideration contains a first and self-evident principle. It seems almost idle to add, that in so far as Natural Theology rests upon this, its foundation is sure—it can neither be gainsaid nor resisted—it is entitled to complete respect—and merits not in the least the epithets of "mere assumption," "speculation," and "taste," with which Dr. Chalmers has branded all its conclusions.

The second principle which I proposed to examine is—"The character of the cause may be inferred with certainty from the character of the effect"—or, which is the same thing, "Intelligence and design in the cause, may be inferred with certainty from marks of it in the effect." This, like the first, is taken to be a first or self-evident principle; and the same reasoning is used to prove it to be one.

In each of the judgments we pronounce upon the moral or intellectual characters of our fellow-men, this general principle is always implied. We say a man has courage, because we see the marks of it in his conduct; and attribute to him wisdom, justice, or benevolence, according as his actions show in a greater or less degree their respective signs. Neither his courage, nor his wisdom, his justice, nor his benevolence, are the objects of our senses, or of our consciousness. "And even in ourselves," we are told by metaphysicians, and must perceive the truth of what they assert, "we are conscious only of the operations of mind, in which they are exerted; and know that we possess them only in the way we know other men possess them—by their effects." This man we are sure is shrewd, another simple, and a third deceitful. And though in each case, our decision depends entirely upon the marks of such qualities exhibited in their words and actions, we can no more refuse to make it, than we can refuse to see what is before our eyes. But such decisions are nothing more than an application of the general principle we are considering. It has therefore the strongest claims to be admitted as a first and self-evident truth.

Were it obtained by abstract reasoning, why is it universal? why is it so difficult, if not impossible, to account for it? and when there is occasion to enforce it, why is the appeal invariably made to the common sense of mankind, and never to reasoning? why, instead of argument, do men always make use of ridicule and wit?

It owes as little of its evidence to experience as it does to abstract reasoning. Like that we first considered, it is not a contingent, but a necessary truth. But experience can teach only what is, or what has been, never what *must be*.

Further, experience can discover to us a connexion between a sign and the thing signified by it, only when both are and always have been perceived together. But where the sign only is perceived, experience can show no connexion it has with the thing signified. "Thus, for example," says the philosopher from whom I have already quoted so largely, "thought is a sign of a thinking principle or mind. But how do we know that thought cannot be without a mind? If any man should say that he knows this by experience, he deceives himself. It is impossible he can have any experience of this; because, though we have an immediate knowledge of the existence of thought in ourselves by consciousness, yet we have no immediate knowledge of a mind. The mind is not an immediate object either of sense or of consciousness. We may therefore justly conclude, that the necessary connexion between thought and a mind, or thinking being, is not learned from

experience.—The same reasoning may be applied to the connexion between a work excellently fitted for some purpose, and *design* in the author or cause of that work. One of these, to wit, the work, may be an immediate object of perception. But the design and purpose of the author cannot be an immediate object of perception; and therefore experience can never inform us of any connexion between the one and the other, far less of a necessary connexion."

To the same purpose is a passage of Stewart's Elements. "Our knowledge of our own existence, as sentient and intelligent beings, is not an inference from experience, but a fundamental law of human belief. All that experience can teach me of my internal frame, amounts to a knowledge of the various mental operations whereof I am conscious; but what light does experience throw on the origin of my notions of personality and identity? Is it from having observed a constant conjunction between sensations and sentient beings; thoughts and thinking beings; volitions and active beings; that I infer the existence of that individual and permanent *mind*, to which all the phenomena of my consciousness belong? Our conviction that *other men* are, like ourselves, possessed of thought and reason, together with all the judgments we pronounce on their intellectual and moral characters, cannot (as is still more evident) be resolved into an experimental perception of the conjunction of different objects or events. They are inferences of design from its sensible effects, exactly analogous to those which, in the case of the universe, Philo [Mr. Hume]" and we may add, Dr. Chalmers "would reject as illusions of the fancy."

Thus I think it appears, that the maxim "that intelligence and design in the cause may be inferred with certainty from marks of it in the effect," must, like that first considered, be admitted as a first or self-evident principle, the evidence of which is instantly discovered to us whenever we have need to apply it. It is the major proposition of the argument of Natural Theology for the existence and character of the Deity. He that denies it, "must, if he will be consistent, see no evidence of the existence of any intelligent being but himself."

The third and last proposition we were to examine, which constitutes the minor proposition of the same argument, is—"There are the clearest marks of wisdom and design in the universe." Hence is the conclusion, that the universe owes its existence to a wise and intelligent cause. We cannot set aside this conclusion, but by denying one of the premises. The first we have already considered, and shown that we must admit it, or give up every thing like philosophy or religion, renounce all reasoning and all knowledge, except perhaps that of the immediate and

momentary state of our own minds, and bid adieu to all prudence in the common concerns of life. Must not, then, Dr. Chalmers be supposed to rest his rejection of all theological conclusions, except those derived from revelation, upon his inability to discover in the works of creation those marks of intelligence and design, which appear so obvious to the minds of other men? But to this I shall only say, that the celebrated Galen was a disciple of Epicurus. Yet the structure of the human body was of itself enough to compel him to renounce the philosophy in which he had been educated. Nay, so deep and operative was his conviction, that he not only threw off the weight of a system, which, early imposed, had been long settling deeper and deeper into his mind, but actively employed his powers to convince mankind of what was so evident to himself—that chance could not be the cause of a contrivance so admirable. If such was the effect of one proof out of millions upon the mind of a philosopher of the second century, is he, who in the nineteenth can see no such evidence at all, to be reasoned with?

There is but one argument more, that can possibly be thought of to set aside the conclusions I am endeavouring to establish. It is stated formally by Mr. Hume, and passages have already been quoted from Dr. Chalmers' work, which make it appear that he admits its force. It is introduced by the first of these writers thus.—"Will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance." This is the objection. Let Mr. Stewart give the answer. "This celebrated argument," he says, "appears to me to be little more than an amplification of that which Xenophon puts into the mouth of Aristodemus. 'I behold (says he) none of those governors of the world whom you speak of; whereas here, I see artists actually employed in the execution of their respective works.'—The reply of Socrates, too, is in substance the same with what has since been retorted on Philo, by some of Mr. Hume's opponents. 'Neither yet, Aristodemus, seest thou thy soul, which, however, most assuredly governs thy body: although it may well seem, by thy manner of talking, that it is *chance* and not *reason* which governs thee.'"

It has now, I hope, been satisfactorily shown, that Natural Theology is founded upon necessary truths; and, consequently, that we may rest with security in its conclusions respecting the existence and character of God. According to Dr. Chalmers,

however, "it is all disowned by the severe and scrupulous spirit of the modern inductive philosophy." This is a most extraordinary mistake. But as I have already taken up much room, in addition to what I have quoted from Reid and Stewart, who must be allowed to understand the spirit of that philosophy of which they are disciples so able and distinguished, I shall only state the opinions of Lord Bacon himself, and of Sir Isaac Newton,—"well aware," to use the language of Stewart upon the same subject, "that authorities are not arguments; but when a prejudice, to which authority alone has given currency, is to be combated, what other refutation is likely to prove effectual?"

"I had rather," says Bacon, "believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. And, therefore, God never wrought a miracle to convince atheism, because his ordinary works convince it. It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity."

But all this, however sublime and admirable, Dr. Chalmers would say is nothing to the purpose. For "though lord Bacon pointed out the method of true philosophizing; yet in practice he abandoned it." But Sir Isaac Newton is not an authority so exceptionable. Dr. Chalmers has himself asserted, that "Newton completed in his own person the true philosopher.—He not only saw the principle, but obeyed it." Yet this great man tells him and the world—"The main business of Natural Philosophy is to argue from phenomena without feigning hypotheses; and to deduce causes from effects, till we come to the very first cause, which certainly is not mechanical; and not only to unfold the mechanism of the world, *but chiefly to resolve these and such like questions*—Whence is it that nature does nothing in vain? And whence arises all that order and beauty which we see in the world? How came the bodies of animals to be contrived with so much art, and for what ends were their several parts? Was the eye contrived without skill in opticks, and the ear without knowledge of sounds?"

It is not a little amusing that Dr. Chalmers constantly holds up the philosophy of Des Cartes as a thing to be avoided, when we are told by Dr. Reid—"that having invented a way of his own for proving the existence of the Deity, he maintained that physical causes only should be assigned for phenomena—that philosophy has nothing to do with final causes—and that it is *presump-*

tion in us to pretend to determine for what end any work of nature is framed." Whatever, therefore, Dr. Chalmers may think of his "ether and whirlpools," as respects Natural Theology, at least, he must look upon Des Cartes as nearly as good a reasoner as himself. Be that as it may, if the argument we have now considered is shown to rest upon first principles, and the study of it proved to be no violation of the rules of the inductive philosophy, it would seem enough has been done. But because we have a revelation, Dr. Chalmers thinks it all "superfluous and uncalled for."

Christianity, it is true, poured in upon the world a flood of light, which we should never have enjoyed without her aid. But as God *never left himself without witness*, it was not upon utter darkness. And were there no stronger inducements to the study of Natural Religion, than its beneficial effects upon the mind and character, and that confidence, which even those who depreciate its value, feel that it gives to their faith; still, one would think, to collect the testimony of the things that are made, to the power and divinity of their Maker, would be an employment in which we ought to engage with alacrity and delight. In one word—viewed in no other light than that of the great instrument of moral and religious improvement, which it really is, it does seem that it could not be the intention of God, that it should be rendered worthless by Christianity. But, when a writer on the evidences of our religion tells us, not only that the declarations of revelation are paramount and final, as indeed they are, but that every sentiment which they do not definitively settle, must be absolutely disowned—and declares that in order to receive the testimony of the evangelists and apostles concerning Christ, we must refuse the testimony of the stars and seasons respecting God; it becomes us to hesitate and consider—to prove the reason of the faith that is in us, and see if these things be so.

Dr. Chalmers rests the truth of Christianity exclusively upon the purity of its historical record, the real occurrence of its miracles, and the marks of honesty and integrity in the original witnesses of our Saviour's ministry. As the test of his principles, he introduces an atheist of somewhat peculiar construction, whom he considers as "in the best possible condition for submitting his understanding to the entire impression of the historical evidence."* And indeed, according to this writer's views, all men ought in reason to be atheists, till their eyes are couched to let in the light of revelation. "He does not deny the existence of God to be a possible truth; but yet affirms, that while there is

* p. 215.

nothing before him but the consciousness of what passes within, and the observation of what passes without, it remains an assertion destitute of proof, and can have no more effect upon his conviction than any other nonentity of the imagination."* And this is precisely the state in which Dr. Chalmers thinks all men should be, before they are presented with the historical argument. He knows nothing of "the fancied character and attributes of the Deity"—"has no theory"—and has had as little to do with "the reason of the thing" as Dr. Chalmers himself. "Though the power which presided over nature should be an arbitrary, an unjust, or a malignant being, all this may startle a deist, but it will not prevent this consistent atheist from acquiescing in any legitimate inference, to which the miracles of the gospel, viewed in the simple light of historical facts, may chance to carry him."†

Having thus prepared his subject, our author lays before him the historical evidence. And—though it has been shown that, in all our judgments upon the moral and intellectual characters of our fellow-men, there is implied an inference from sensible effects precisely analogous to that, which, in the case of the universe, the atheist rejects; and though consequently, if he would be consistent, he must shut his mind to all the evidence of testimony—we will even suppose him to give full admission to the historical argument. "What then, we ask, does the atheist make of the miracles of the New Testament?—If there be nothing in the ordinary phenomena of nature, to infer a God, do these extraordinary phenomena supply him with no argument?"‡

Upon the issue of this inquiry does, and must, Dr. Chalmers rest the fate of his system. The miracle of which he chooses to try the effect, and I know not one he could select more to his purpose, is that of the voice from heaven, which pronounced—"This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." But the atheist is incapable, by constitution, even of admitting "the existence of that being from whom the voice proceeded." For this would imply a reasoning from the effect to the cause—a reasoning which, by supposition, he rejects. Dr. Chalmers demands of him "no unprecedented exercise of his faculties."§ In this case, therefore, as in his renunciation of the argument from final causes, he is to admit no evidence but that of "the consciousness of what passes within, and the observation of what passes without." But from these, in the sense Dr. Chalmers affixes to the expressions, it has already been shown, he has no proof of the existence of any intelligent being but himself. What? are not miracles, it will be asked, a sufficient evidence of the truth of a doctrine?

* p. 213, &c. † p. 215. ‡ p. 216. § p. 17.

Most certainly. But let us see upon what that sufficiency depends.

The effect of unexceptionable historical evidence, such as that of Christianity, is to place us, as nearly as possible, in the situation of the original witnesses of the events recorded. How do we know that any of these events are properly miraculous? or that they imply a suspension of one or more of those laws which regulate the course of nature? Not surely from the testimony of the senses merely—for that can prove no more than the fact that certain events have happened—but from a deduction of reason. The senses supply us with facts, and from these we discover, by a deduction of reason, that there is what is called a course of nature. And in like manner, it is only by an exercise of reason upon facts, furnished by the senses, that we can know that, in the instance of any of these facts, any one of those laws which govern the course of nature has been suspended. This, I hope, is evident.

When we have then ascertained an event to be properly miraculous, the next step in our progress is, to prove that it implies the interposition of the Supreme Being. Now from that fundamental law of human belief—that every effect must have a cause adequate to produce it—we infer, that a power, able to suspend the laws of nature, must be equal to that which established them. The argument from final causes proves this power, to be the power of God, and to be almighty. When therefore this power proposes to exert itself in a given way (which is all we mean by a law of nature) it must continue to exert itself in that way, either till it changes its purpose of itself, or till it is counteracted by an equal power. But the supposition of two almighty powers involves a contradiction. Therefore a miracle can be the work of God alone. He alone can suspend those laws which he has himself established.

We are next to ascertain, how these miracles prove the truth of what they are brought to support. There is most evidently no necessary connexion between miracles and the truth of *any* information. And it must be equally plain, that, in order to show there is any connexion between them at all, it is indispensable to ascertain the Being who performs them to be *omniscient* and to be *true*—to be *true*, or he might deceive us—to be *omniscient*, or he might be deceived himself. There is no need of argument to prove this proposition. It will be admitted by every one who understands the terms in which it is expressed. Now to ascertain the omniscience and veracity of the Deity, the study of Natural Theology is absolutely necessary. For they certainly cannot be proved by the mere observation of miraculous events, and

to say, with Dr. Chalmers, that they are proved by revelation, (the authority of which, it is admitted on all hands, depends upon miracles) involves the absurdity of advancing evidence for facts, to the admission of which very evidence, those facts are themselves indispensable. Before we can allow miracles, then, to be the proper and sufficient testimonials of any doctrine whatever, we must have all those "previous conceptions of God's character," which Dr. Chalmers' philosophy spurns as "fanciful."—We must believe Him to be omniscient; and we must believe Him to be true. That we have in fact a sufficient foundation for forming such "pre-conceptions," has already been abundantly proved; and that the system of Dr. Chalmers has not superseded the necessity of them, is now, I hope, equally apparent.

It may be added, in order to show that we have not been inattentive to the question, "What readest thou?" while discussing so much at length the question, "What thinkest thou?"—that the power of man to determine the existence, character, and providence of God, is repeatedly acknowledged in the writings both of the Old and of the New Testament. How Dr. Chalmers can reconcile his opinion of our utter inability in this respect with his ideas of "the supreme authority of revelation," is inexplicable. I will quote but two passages, because where they are so plain and explicit, it is needless to multiply them, and because the two I have in mind are both in the words of St. Paul, which circumstance may confront the assertion of Dr. Chalmers, that "these principles," by which he means the principles we have just examined, "were utterly unknown at the first publication of Christianity!"* "The invisible things of God," says he who preached the gospel to the Galatians and Corinthians, the Thessalonians and Philippians,† and all the Gentiles, "from the creation of the world are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made*, even his eternal power and divinity—so that men are without excuse."—And to the men of Lycaonia he declares—"We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God, who made heaven and earth and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways: *nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good*, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

We have now shown, that in maintaining the falsehood of Natural Theology, Dr. Chalmers rejects a science acknowledged by the scriptures, and supported by first, self-evident, and necessary truths—and that in refusing its aid in establishing the authority

* p. 239. † See page 239.

of our religion, he has rejected the very basis upon which it all stands. Surely such consequences are enough to sink any hypothesis or system of opinions, to which they are attached.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EVANGELIST JOHN, CONCERNING OUR LORD.

John is supposed to have written his gospel, to supply the deficiencies in the narratives of the other evangelists; and not the least important of these deficiencies is supposed to have been, the omission of a direct assertion of our Lord's absolute and unqualified divinity. The beginning of John's gospel, it is thought by many, has supplied this great desideratum. He says, *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,—full of grace and truth.* But has John, in these words, asserted our Lord's unqualified divinity?

By *the Word*, it is admitted, is meant our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also as freely admitted, that our Lord Jesus Christ is here called *God*. But is it not obvious also, that he is here called *God* in a sense, in which he could be with *God;* and in a sense too, in which he is to be considered as the son of God,—*the only begotten of the Father?* Here is plainly a distinction between *the word*, and *the Father*. And it must be a distinction of persons, otherwise one could not be *with* the other. Does John then mean to inform us, that our Lord Jesus Christ was a distinct person from God,—a distinct intelligent being,—and was *with God*, and yet was absolutely, at the same time, and in an unqualified sense, *the one only living and true God?* If this be the doctrine of John's gospel, let us receive it; for the testimony of this evangelist is worthy of all acceptation. But the rule is admitted by all, that scripture is the best interpreter of scripture; and it will not be less readily allowed, that a fair comparison of the testimony of any one writer in the scriptures, upon any subject on which he has given his testimony at large, is not only the best means of ascertaining the import of any single doubtful expression, but the only means by which we may obtain with certainty the doctrine which he means to inculcate. If John, in

the beginning of his gospel, intended to teach his readers the absolute deity of our Lord, there can be no doubt but that the rest of his testimony will be conformed to this intention. I would then examine the testimony of John concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and ask, whether he has not frequently, and most clearly, marked and maintained the distinction, between *him* and and *the Father;* and distinctly and fully taught us, in the very words of our Lord himself, his derivation from, and dependence on *the Father who sent him?**

1. I refer you to the 14th chapter of his gospel. *If ye had known* ME, says Jesus to his Apostles, *ye should have known* MY FATHER ALSO; *and from henceforth ye* KNOW HIM, *and* HAVE SEEN HIM. *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet* HAST THOU NOT KNOWN ME, *Philip? He that hath seen* ME, *hath seen the* FATHER; *and how sayest thou,* SHEW US THE FATHER?—Now if we look not beyond these expressions, it is very evident, I think, and will be readily acknowledged, that our Lord did not mean to tell Philip, that whoever saw him, *literally* saw the Father. To *see God*, in these words of our Lord, is obviously the same as to *know God;* and, he that hath SEEN *me*, *hath* SEEN *the Father*, is of precisely the same signification as, *if ye had* KNOWN *me, ye should have* KNOWN *my Father*

* *When the scope of a small book, or of any particular portion of it, is expressly mentioned by the sacred writer, it should be carefully observed.*

Of all criteria this is the most certain, by which to ascertain the scope of a book. Sometimes it is mentioned at its commencement, or towards its close; or sometimes it is intimated in other parts of the same book, rather obscurely perhaps, but in such a manner that a diligent and attentive reader may readily ascertain it. Thus the scope of the whole Bible, collectively, is contained in its manifold utility, which St. Paul expressly states in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17; and also in Rom. xv. 4. In like manner, the royal author of Ecclesiastes announces pretty clearly, at the beginning of his book, the subject he intends to discuss, viz. to shew that all human affairs are vain, uncertain frail, and imperfect; and such being the case, he proceeds to inquire, what profit hath a man of all his labour that he taketh under the sun. (Eccl. i. 2, 3.) and towards the close of the same book, (xii. 8.) he repeats the same subject, the truth of which he had proved by experience. So in the commencement of the book of Proverbs, Solomon distinctly announces their scope. (Chap. i. 1.—iv. 6.) St. John also, towards the close of his gospel, announces his object in writing to be, *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.* Therefore all those discourses of our Lord, which are recorded almost exclusively by this Evangelist and Apostle, are to be read and considered with *reference to this particular design;* and if this circumstance be kept in view, they will derive much additional force and beauty.

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also. But we have the express testimony of John, in the 1st chapter of his gospel, NO MAN HATH SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME. *The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,* HE HATH REVEALED HIM; or, HE HATH MADE HIM KNOWN to us. And hear also what our blessed Lord himself says, in immediate continuation of the words addressed to Philip, *he that hath* SEEN *me, hath* SEEN *the Father;* and *how sayest thou then,* SHEW US THE FATHER? *Believest thou not, that* I AM IN THE FATHER, AND THE FATHER IN ME. *The words that I speak unto you,* I SPEAK NOT OF MYSELF; *but* THE FATHER, THAT DWELLETH IN ME, *he doeth the works.* See then how we *know* the Father, in *knowing Jesus;* and how we *see* the Father, in *seeing Jesus.* He speaks unto us the *words,* and he does the *works of the Father.* Thus is he *a manifestation of the Father to us.* The expressions certainly imply a very close relation of our Saviour to the Father; a very intimate union with him. But do they not also most obviously express, not only a real distinction of persons, but the real subordination of the Son, his dependence on the Father, and the derivation from God of all the wisdom and power with which he spake and acted?

II. I refer you to the 5th chapter of John, from the 17th to the 31st verse. To the Jews, who had persecuted and sought to kill Jesus, because he had healed a diseased man on the Sabbath, he answered, MY FATHER WORKETH *hitherto, and* I WORK. *Therefore,* adds the evangelist, *the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the Sabbath, but* SAID THAT GOD WAS HIS FATHER, MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD. Here observe that, although our Lord had indeed called God *his Father,* he had not uttered an intimation, beyond this expression, of any thing like *equality* with God. The inference, that he thus assumed this equality, was an inference only of his inveterate and implacable enemies. But did our Lord justify them in this construction of his words? Attend, and say if language can more explicitly declare derivation and dependence, than it does in the answer of Jesus. *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* THE SON CAN DO NOTHING OF HIMSELF, *but* WHAT HE SEETH THE FATHER DO; *for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth and quickeneth the dead, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but* HATH COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT UNTO THE SON; *that all may honour the Son, as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not* THE FATHER WHO HATH SENT HIM. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that*

heareth my word, and *believeth on* HIM THAT SENT ME, *hath everlasting life*, and *shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. For as the Father hath life in himself*, SO HATH HE GIVEN TO THE SON *to have life in himself*; and HATH GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT *also, because he is the son of man.* I CAN OF MY OWN SELF DO NOTHING. *As I hear, I judge. And my judgment is just; because* I SEEK NOT MY OWN WILL, BUT THE WILL OF THE FATHER THAT SENT ME. Consider these expressions of our Lord, and then decide, whether he meant to justify these hostile Jews in their accusation, that he had *made himself equal with God?* or rather, I would ask, could he at the same time have asserted his office and claims as *Messiah, the Son of God, and judge of the world*, and more unequivocally have ascribed all the honour of his office, and all his authority and power, to *the Father who sent him?*

III. [Chap. xiv. 28.] Our Lord directly asserts, *my Father is greater than I.* And, [Chap. x. 30.] he says also, *I and my Father are one.* Does he here seem to contradict himself? The distinction between himself and the Father is here clearly marked; and his union with the Father as clearly asserted. The explanation of this apparent contradiction, or rather, of this apparent opposition of expression, is however very simple. The word *one*, in the expressions, *I and my Father are one*, in the original, is in the neuter gender; and means literally *one thing.* Nothing would have been absurd than to have translated it either, *one person*, or *one essence.* It plainly means nothing more than, *one in disposition; one in design.* The Jews, however, hearing these words, *took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them, many good works have I shewed you from my Father. For which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou, being a man*, MAKEST THYSELF GOD. Observe here again, it is by his enemies that he is said to have made himself God; and they bring this accusation against him, as an inference from his declaration, *I and my Father are one.* They well knew indeed,—for his words can bear no other meaning,—that it was only in *will* and in *purpose* that he had asserted himself to be *one with God.* But in the malignity of a most hostile and ungoverned temper, they impute to him the blasphemy of assuming, not only an equality with God, but to be *actually God.* Now let any one, with an ingenuous mind, read the answer of our Lord to this allegation of his enemies, and say if he warranted the construction they put upon his words. [Verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.] *Jesus answered, them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came,—and the scrip-*

ture cannot be broken say ye of HIM WHOM THE FATHER HATH SANCTIFIED AND SENT INTO THE WORLD, *thou blasphemest, because I said,* I AM THE SON OF GOD? *If I do not* THE WORKS OF MY FATHER, *believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that* THE FATHER IS IN ME, AND I IN HIM.—These words surely need no comment. Who does not, in these words, perceive the perfect consistency of the expressions, *I and my Father are one;* and, *my Father is greater than I.*

IV. Our Lord most explicitly assures us, that he came not of himself, but that he was sent by his Father. [ch. vii. 28, 29.] Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, saying, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; and* I AM NOT COME OF MYSELF; *but he that* SENT ME *is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, for* I AM FROM HIM, AND HE HATH SENT ME. Again, [ch. viii. 42.] *If God were your Father, ye would love me;* FOR I PROCEEDED FORTH, AND CAME FROM GOD; NEITHER CAME I OF MYSELF, BUT HE SENT ME.—Now if our Lord Jesus Christ had been the Supreme God, could he so have spoken of himself?

V. Observe how our Lord speaks of his doctrine. [ch. vii. 16, 17.] *Jesus said, My doctrine is* NOT MINE, BUT HIS THAT SENT ME. *If any man will do* HIS WILL, *he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be* OF GOD, OR WHETHER I SPEAK OF MYSELF. Again, [ch. viii. 28.] *Then said Jesus, when ye have lifted up the son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I* DO NOTHING OF MYSELF; *but* AS MY FATHER HATH TAUGHT ME, *I speak these things.* Again, [ch. xii. 49, 50.] I HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF MYSELF; *but the Father which hath sent me,* HE GAVE ME A COMMANDMENT *what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even* AS THE FATHER SAID UNTO ME, *so I speak.* Again, [ch. xiv. 10 and 24.] *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you,* I SPEAK NOT OF MYSELF; *but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is* NOT MINE, *but* THE FATHER'S *which sent me.** Here then again the blessed Jesus illustrates the declaration, *I and my Father are one.* But has he not also most clearly and fully expressed his own entire dependence; and ascribed all the wisdom with which he spake and taught, to the Father who sent him?

VI. Our Lord affirms that what he had, he had received from his Father. [ch. xiii. 3.] *Jesus, knowing that the Father had* GIVEN

* See also ch. xii. 49, 50.

ALL THINGS *into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, &c.* [ch. vi. 39.] *This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which* HE HATH GIVEN ME *I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* [ch. x. 29.] *My Father, which* GAVE THEM ME, (that is, gave me my sheep,) *is greater than all.* And, [ch. xvii. 2, 6, 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24.] *As* THOU HAST GIVEN HIM POWER *over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. I have manifested thy name to the men which* THOU GAVEST ME *out of the world. Thine they were, and* THOU GAVEST THEM ME, *and they have kept thy word. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I* CAME OUT FROM THEE, *and they have believed that* THOU DIDST SEND ME. *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom Thou has given me,* THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, AS WE ARE. *As* THOU *hast sent* ME *into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. Neither pray I for these alone,*—my apostles,—*but for them also who shall believe on me through their word, that they may all be one;* AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US; *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which* THOU GAVEST ME, *I have given them; that* THEY *may be* ONE, *even as* WE *are* ONE. *Father, I will that they also* WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME *be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*—These words surely are not of doubtful import, at least so far as the doctrine is concerned, that whatever glory our blessed Lord has as a Saviour, was given to him by God. And not less distinctly do they define the nature of the union between God and himself. *He was one with God, as his apostles were one with him; and as we also are one with him, if we are indeed his disciples.* I would not weaken the impression of truths so obvious and striking, by an attempt to expound them. But it may not be amiss to remark, that in the expressions, *that they may be one, as we are;* and, *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us;* the word *one*, in the original, is in the neuter gender, and means literally *one thing;* or, more properly, *one in disposition, design, will and action;* as in the expression, *I and my Father are one.* It would seem that this alone should settle the question of the import of this last, and frequently misunderstood expression.

VII. Our Lord teaches us, that he is not the final object of our faith. *Jesus said,* [ch. xii. 44.] *he that believeth on me, believeth* NOT ON ME, *but* ON HIM THAT SENT ME. He declares that he sought not his own glory. [ch. viii. 50 and 54.] *I seek not*

mine own glory. If I honour myself, my honour is nothing. It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God. And with equal simplicity and explicitness he asserts, that he did not his own will. [ch. vi. 38.] *I came down from heaven,* NOT TO DO MINE OWN WILL, *but the will of* THE FATHER *that sent me.* [ch. xv. 10.] *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as* I HAVE KEPT MY FATHER'S COMMANDMENTS, *and abide in his love.* [ch. xiv. 31.] *As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.* [ch. iv. 34.] *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* [ch. viii. 39.] *The Father hath not left me alone; for* I DO ALWAYS THOSE THINGS THAT PLEASE HIM. [ch. xvii. 34.] *I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* [ch. xviii. 11.] *The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* Could our Saviour, in language either more plain, or more forcible, have referred us to God as the end of our faith; or expressed his own entire dependence on the Father, and his unreserved devotion to his will?

VIII. I will only add, that Jesus not only calls God *his Father*, but also *his God;* and, *the only true God;* and as his God, *always prayed to him.* [ch. xx. 17.] *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to* MY FATHER, *and to* YOUR FATHER; *to* MY GOD, *and to* YOUR GOD.—And, [ch. xvii. 3.] *This is* LIFE ETERNAL, *that they might know* THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, *and Jesus Christ* WHOM THOU HAST SENT. And, at the grave of Lazarus, [ch. xi. 41, 42.] *he lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always. But because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me.* See also his prayer in the 17th chapter, the longest on record in the New Testament. Can we doubt then, whether God was not equally his Father, as he is our Father? Are not these simple and perspicuous views, at once of the relation between God and Christ, and of the actual mission of our Saviour from the Father; of the derivation of all his powers from God; of his dependence on God, to whom he prayed; and of the connexion of life everlasting with him, because it is by him that the Father has spoken to us the words of eternal life? *I have not spoken of myself,* says this blessed Teacher; [ch. xii. 49, 50.] *but* THE FATHER WHICH SENT ME, *he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that* HIS *commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore,* EVEN AS THE FATHER SAID UNTO ME, *so I speak.*

You will observe, that all these testimonies concerning our Lord are given by the evangelist John; and that all of them are taken from his gospel. And are they not most explicit in attes-

tation of the doctrines, that our blessed Lord was the great *Apostle* and *Ambassador* of God; that he was *one with the Father*, because the Father peculiarly *dwelt in him*; because, as no other ever did, he *spake the words*, and *did the works of God*, in the great cause of the salvation, and eternal life and happiness of men? That he was, however, not only a distinct person from God, but dependent on him, and subordinate to him; that all his power, and wisdom, and honour, were derived from God; and that his was a divine authority, claiming and deserving the most grateful acknowledgment, and most entire submission; claiming honour to him as we honour the Father, because by him only we know with certainty the will and purposes of the Father; through him only we can acceptably approach the Father; and he it is who is appointed to give eternal life to as many as hear, believe and obey him? Can it be supposed then, when John said, in the beginning of his gospel, *the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*; that he meant to assert the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not much more reasonable to suppose, that he intended these expressions should be understood in consistency with the numerous expressions here adduced, and ascribed by him to our Lord? Do we impose the smallest constraint on the expressions, *the Word was God*, by supposing that John meant them to be understood in the same sense, in which Jesus himself said, *I and my Father are one?*—But, it is objected, *all things were made by him.* And again, *the world was made by him.* I would ask, if it may not be, and if it probably is not, the full import of these words, that the *christian world*, or the new spiritual creation of the gospel, and all things in this new spiritual creation, were made by him? *We*, and all things,—I mean literally, *all things*,—are indeed *God's workmanship*; for *he that built*, or made *all things*, *is God.* But, if we are christians, we are *created in*, or *through Christ Jesus, unto good works.* (Eph. ii. 10.) He has *made both* Jews and Gentiles *one new man in himself.* (Eph. ii. 16.) And, we are told, (2 Cor. v. 17.) *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* And when Paul says, in his epistle to the Colossians, (ch. i. 16—19.) *by him*, that is, by Christ, *were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist*; he also immediately informs us, that it was BECAUSE IT PLEASED THE FATHER, THAT IN HIM SHOULD ALL FULNESS DWELL. While we believe therefore, and rejoice in the faith, that *he is the head of the body, the church*, we must believe also, for so it is declared

unto us, (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.) that *the end cometh, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. He must reign indeed, until he hath put all enemies under his feet; for God hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that* HE IS EXCEPTED WHICH DID PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIM. *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then will* THE SON ALSO *himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him,* THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL.

From erroneous views of the person and offices of our Lord, have resulted, I think, very erroneous views of his religion. The belief that there is no real distinction between the only true God and our Lord Jesus Christ, or a distinction not to be understood, or defined; that Jesus Christ is himself the only true God; and therefore that God, the great Jehovah, the infinite and eternal Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, came into the world, toiled, suffered, and died for us; that thus an infinite satisfaction was made to divine justice; that God himself received an infinite punishment for the sins of the whole world; that the violated law of God was thus vindicated; that men are made righteous, not by doing righteousness, but by having the righteousness of a dying God imputed to them; and that, so far from being called by the gospel to *give all diligence to make their calling and election sure*, salvation is wrought out, by means wholly independent of their own efforts, for those who are to receive it; and that their own righteousness therefore, in the sight of God, is utterly worthless; these, and other very great errors,—for so they seem to me to be,—have, I think, principally grown out of the misconception concerning our Lord, that he is literally the only living and true God. I pray you then diligently, ingenuously, and seriously to search, examine, and compare the scriptures for yourselves. And daily remember, and dwell on the petition in the prayer of our blessed Lord, in the 17th of John, for it most nearly concerns us,—*neither pray I for these alone*,—my apostles,—*but for* THEM ALSO THAT SHALL BELIEVE ON ME THROUGH THEIR WORD, THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE; AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE IN US; THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME.

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

EXAMPLE OF ELOQUENCE.

CHARLES BUTLER, in a late work entitled "Historical Memoirs," gives the following anecdote of Dr. Thomas Hussey, the Catholic bishop of Waterford.

"His eloquence in the pulpit was really great; but it rather subdued than satisfied reason. The writer of these pages was present at a sermon which he preached, on the small number of the elect. Copying Massillon, he asked, 'Whether if the arch of heaven were to open, and the Son of Man, bursting from the mercy in which he is now enveloped, should stand in that chapel, and judge his hearers, it were quite certain that three, or even two;—nay, trembling for myself, as well as for you! is it quite certain that even one of us!'—exclaimed the Doctor, in a voice of thunder, 'will be saved?' During the whole of this apostrophe, the audience was agonized. At the ultimate interrogation there was a general shriek, and some fell on the ground. This was the greatest triumph of eloquence that the writer has ever chanced to witness; but, as he has before observed, it rather subdued than satisfied."

A WEDNESDAY EVENING IN LINCOLN.

"PASSING through Lincoln a few months ago in company with a friend, and having been informed that there was a small society of Unitarians in the city, who met together every Wednesday evening for the purpose of mutual edification, by religious reading and conversation, we felt very desirous of attending one of these meetings.

"We found it was their custom to begin the meeting with prayer, and afterwards to read a portion of some plain, popular and interesting Unitarian publication; and it was a rule that any person present was at liberty to stop the reader, to ask any questions, or to make any remarks he might think proper. In the present instance the meeting was opened with an excellent and appropriate prayer by an elderly and respectable gentleman, a member of the congregation; after which Mr. H—— read a portion of Dr. Toulmin's Letters to Freestone, frequently stopping to introduce some useful remarks, both by way of elucidating the subject, and drawing out the latent faculties of the young, by leading them to

reflect, and to form an opinion upon the subject before them; and this he did in a way so easy, so interesting and familiar, that the young people appeared to look up to him, as to a friend and a father. Mr. H—— was particularly careful to encourage young persons to express their sentiments; and he shewed great address in making every speaker appear to the best possible advantage. We were particularly gratified by seeing five or six young men come in from brick-making; they had left off their labours a little the earlier that they might enjoy the benefit of social and religious converse; and on Mrs. H——'s asking them if they had lost any thing by coming, they replied that they had not, for that they had risen a little earlier in the morning. Mr. H—— concluded the meeting with another excellent and impressive prayer; and the little friendly society then separated with a very strong appearance of the most unfeigned attachment to each other, and particularly to their beloved pastor, who thus interested himself for their intellectual and religious improvement.

This easy and interesting mode of communicating instruction, is certainly attended with many advantages. Young persons are not merely listening in passive silence to what is delivered to them; but they are encouraged and invited to take an active part in these improving exercises: and it is obvious how much more interesting they will be on this account to a young person of the least degree of activity of mind. These meetings are likewise a powerful means of bringing the members of this small society acquainted with each other, and of forming a bond of Christian love and fellowship between them, the very reverse of what we too commonly see, in societies where no such means are practised." *Christian Reformer.*

THE PECULIAR DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL.

Mr. Yates has lately published a sermon with this title, of which the following paragraphs constitute the introduction.

"Nothing is more common among those of our fellow-christians, who are called orthodox, than to speak of their opinions as the *Peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel.* By this expression they evidently intend to convey the idea, that those opinions are not to be found in any other system of religious belief, and that in the communication of them to mankind the chief and distinguishing value of Christianity consists. Nevertheless we find it repeatedly asserted by the more learned of the orthodox writers, that indubitable traces of these opinions are to be found in the tenets and practices of many heathen nations, and that, although now altered and corrupted in various ways, they appear to have been received from time immemorial over every quarter of the globe.

"Upon the conquest of America in the 16th century, the Roman Catholic missionaries, who laboured during a great part of their lives to convert the natives of that vast and newly-discovered territory, found that the most essential parts of their system, such as the adoration of Three in One, the Incarnation of the Second Person in the Divine Trinity, and his expiatory sacrifice, were already admitted; and they considered the surprising fact of the reception of these sublime mysteries among tribes so barbarous and so remote, as a splendid omen of success.* That the same doctrines have been very generally believed among the nations of the *Eastern* world, is asserted with equal confidence, and by a numerous train of esteemed and popular authors. The late Dr. Claudius Buchanan in particular, whose authority respecting facts of this nature stands in the highest repute, and whose information was received a few years since with an avidity and admiration rarely paralleled, states that the ideas of a Tri-une God, and of the Incarnation and Atonement of the Second Person, are current throughout almost the whole of Asia.† What a glaring inconsistency is it, to call these the '*Peculiar Doctrines of Christianity*,' and yet to attempt the confirmation of them by citing the long-established convictions of innumerable heathen nations."

AN EXTRACT FROM WHITEFIELD.

When Wesley began to preach and publish his opposition to the doctrines of Election and Irresistible Grace, his colleague Whitefield, who did not lack the full assurance of faith on these points, was exceedingly grieved and scandalized. He wrote a letter to Wesley in answer to a Sermon on *Free Grace*, in which is the following most singularly naked statement of his system.

"*Fourthly*, I shall now proceed to another head. Again, says the dear Mr. Wesley, page 15, par. 16. 'How uncomfortable a thought is this, that thousands and millions of men, without any

* "'That which is difficult in our law to believe,' says Dr. D'Acosta, 'has been made easy among the Indians, because the Devil had made them comprehend even the self-same things, which he had stolen from our evangelical law, as their manner of confession, their adoration of Three in One, and such like; the which, against the will of the enemy, have holpen for the easy receiving of the truth.'

"See also the History of California, by Venegas, Vol. I. pp. 88, 92. English Translation: and the History of America, by Dr. Robertson, who cites additional authorities, although, as we might have expected from an heterodox philosopher, he is himself very sceptical upon the subject. Book iv. § 7."

† "Star in the East, 7th Edition, 1810."

preceding offence or fault of theirs, were unchangeably doomed to everlasting burnings!'

"But who ever asserted, 'that thousands and millions of men, without any preceding offence or fault of theirs, were unchangeably doomed to everlasting burnings?' Do not they who believe in God's dooming men to everlasting burnings, also believe that God looked upon them as men fallen in Adam? and that that decree which ordained the punishment, first regarded the crime by which it was deserved? How then are they doomed without any preceding fault? Surely Mr. Wesley *will own God's justice* in imputing Adam's sin to his posterity; and also that, after Adam fell, and his posterity in him, God might justly have passed them ALL by, without sending his Son to be a Saviour for ANY ONE. Unless you heartily agree to both these points, you do not believe Original Sin aright. If you do own them, then you must acknowledge the doctrine of Election and Reprobation to be highly just and reasonable; for, if God might justly impute Adam's sin to ALL, and afterwards have passed by ALL, then he might justly pass by *some*. Turn on the right hand, or on the left, you are reduced to an inextricable dilemma. And if you would be consistent, you must either give up the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's Sin, or receive the *amiable doctrine* of Election, with a holy and righteous reprobation, as its consequent: for, whether you can believe it or no, the word of God abides faithful—*The Election has obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*"

EPITAPH, BY HANNAH MORE

On Mrs. Little, in Ratcliffe Church, Bristol.

[Never before published.]

O could this verse her bright example spread
And teach the living, while it praised the dead,
Then, reader, should it speak her hope divine,
Not to exalt her faith, but strengthen thine;
Then should her ev'ry virtue stand confest,
'Till every virtue kindled in thy breast!
But if thou slight the monitory strain,
And she has lived, to thee at least, in vain:
Yet let her death an awful lesson give:
The dying Christian speaks to all that live.
Enough for her, that here her ashes rest,
'Till God's own plaudit shall her worth attest.

REVIEW.

ARTICLE IV.

Memoirs of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton, with a selection from her Correspondence and other Unpublished Writings. By Miss Benger, 2 vols. 16mo. pp. 688. London, 1818.

One of the proudest characteristics of the present age, one which marks more decidedly than perhaps any thing else, the great and general progress of improvement, consists in the number of the productions of females, which have essentially contributed to increase and extend that cultivation, of which they are the proofs. It is but a few years, since, if female authors were not unknown, their efforts were principally confined to some of the lower walks of literature, and letters and novels were all that were expected, or perhaps all that would have been tolerated, from what is called the weaker sex. It is only within the present generation, that the literature of the world has been enriched by the powerful eloquence, the philosophical and poetical observation of M. de Stäel, the penetration, accuracy, strong sense, and correct feeling of Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. Hamilton, and the delicate taste and sensibility of Mrs. Grant. Religion herself will not disdain to acknowledge the obligations conferred on her, within the same short period, by the writings of Hannah More; and history will point to one among us, whose labours have been honourable to herself, and her country. These are not all, who have contributed to adorn and improve the present period; and we have not mentioned these as mere prodigies, to excite a barren admiration, but as the satisfactory and honourable evidences of the great progress of general refinement and education, and of the high powers, which may be discovered among those, who have hitherto been regarded as unworthy or incapable of partaking the toils and the rewards of literary exertion. There are few, very few authors in higher or more deserved estimation, either for the talent they have discovered, or the good they have accomplished, than some of those we have mentioned. And we trust their labours will not be lost to the world. They have pointed out the means of a judicious cultivation of the female mind, and the result of their efforts presents a sufficient encouragement to others to pursue the path they have so successfully trod.

Nothing which serves to illustrate the progress of the important change, which has taken place in the value and estimation of the works of this class of writers, can be devoid of interest; and we have, moreover, a natural curiosity to become acquainted with the private life and character of those, who have distinguished themselves in the service of the public. The Memoirs of Mrs. Hamilton possess claims upon our attention on both these accounts, and a still stronger one from the number of her letters, which are added, and which discover the same excellent sense, and cheerfulness of disposition, which characterize her other writings. The earlier part of her life was marked by few interruptions of that enjoyment, which arises from a happy combination of external circumstances, and a peculiar buoyancy and hilarity of temper. Her domestic circle was indeed broken up by the death of her father, which occurred during her infancy, but at the age of six years, she was confided by her mother to the care of an uncle and aunt, who lived in a retired situation, and whom she describes as being in a high degree deserving of esteem, for their virtues, and of respect for their intellectual powers. "By this worthy couple," she says, "I was adopted, and educated with a care and tenderness that has been seldom equalled. No child ever spent so happy a life; nor, indeed, have I ever met with any thing at all resembling the way in which we lived, except the description given by Rousseau of Wolmar's farm and vintage."

In 1767, when she was only nine years old, the death of her mother, from whom she had been almost entirely separated for three years, could have made but a slight and transient impression upon her. Indeed, she was accustomed to speak of the death of the aunt, who had supplied to her the place of a parent, as the *first sorrow* of her life. Till the age of twenty-two, therefore, she continued to enjoy, almost without interruption, the pleasures which are bestowed by youth, cheerfulness, and good dispositions.

In the year 1786, the return of her brother from India was not merely a vast addition to her happiness, but the source of much of the information and correct thought, which appear in her works. This gentleman had acquired reputation "not by patronage or protection, but by unblemished conduct and unconquerable exertion." He ranked high among the accomplished scholars in India, who were at that time devoting themselves to oriental literature, and was appointed by the Governor General Hastings to translate from the Persian, the Hedaya, or code of Mussulman Laws. For this purpose he returned to England, and after publishing a history of the Rohilla war, in which he had

been personally engaged as an officer, he devoted himself sedulously to his Persian studies. In his society, Mrs. Hamilton became insensibly familiarized to the customs and manners of the East. Under his protection she paid her first visit to the metropolis; and in the circle, to which his acquaintance with Mr. Hastings and Sir William Jones enabled him to introduce her, she found all the charms of brilliant powers and accomplished minds, combined with the pleasure of novelty, and the delight of first becoming conscious of her own peculiar talents. She spent several years in this situation, the happiness of which was interrupted only by the death of her uncle, whose life was suddenly terminated by an epidemic disorder. But in the beginning of the year 1792, the scene was totally changed, and Mrs. Hamilton lost by the death of her brother, her dearest relative, and most valuable friend; at a period, too, when he was about to reap the reward of his arduous and meritorious exertions. This was an irreparable loss, an almost overwhelming affliction; and she, with her only sister, Mrs. Blake, secluded herself from the society in which she had so long delighted, and retired to a quiet country village. As the poignancy of grief, however, gradually wore away, she began to turn her attention to literature, as the best source of relief, after religion has exerted its soothing and composing power. But it was not till 1796 that the *Letters of the Hindoo Rajah* were offered to the public, and they bear traces of the melancholy feelings under the influence of which they were written. The seal of public approbation has, however, long been set upon them, as well as upon her next literary effort, *the Modern Philosophers*, which appeared in 1800, and passed through two editions before the end of the year, without her name. In this year Mrs. Hamilton commenced her most important and valuable work, the *Letters on Education*, the first volume of which was published in 1801, and gained her "the acquaintance or correspondence of many distinguished individuals," and the praise of all, who were interested in the subject, and capable of appreciating the value of her labours. She had now recovered the natural tone of her feelings, and was again happy and cheerful. We extract the following letter, written about this time, to illustrate the union of sense and vivacity, which gave a charm to her correspondence and her society. We must not omit to mention it, likewise, as a proof of the benevolence with which she endeavoured to develope and draw forth literary talent in those of her own sex, who were devoting themselves to such pursuits. "The following charming letter on castle-building was addressed," says Miss Benger, "after a very short acquaintance, to one, whom her kindness distinguished in adversity, whom her encouragement

roused to exertion, and her friendship preserved from despondence. Neither disparity of years, nor inequality of situation, formed any barrier to the progress of intimacy and confidence. The woman of acknowledged talents and celebrity, appears not only to have disclaimed, but even to have forgotten the distance between herself and her undistinguished correspondent."

1801.

"I perfectly agree with you in considering castles as more useful edifices than they are usually allowed to be. It is only plodding matter of fact dulness, that cannot comprehend their use. I do not scruple to confess to you, as I find you are a sister adept in this art of free-masonry, that I owe to it three-fourths of my sense, and half my virtue. It is by giving free scope to the imagination, that one becomes thoroughly acquainted with the real dispositions of one's own heart: it is by comparing the ardent efforts of exalted virtue, formed by the fancy, with what conscience tells us we have performed, that we are instigated to improvement; and by tracing the combinations of which our castles have been composed, we acquire such a knowledge of our own minds, as at once enlightens the understanding, and betters the heart. I sincerely believe that the great disadvantage of perpetually living in a crowd, is the check it puts upon the free excursions of imagination.

"Was ever Bath belle as much improved by walking on the crowded Crescent, as you and I have been by a solitary ramble, when, at the magic touch of fancy, a new creation has arisen around us? By most of the pious people and pious writers I have met with, the imagination is treated as a sort of evil spirit, that must be exorcised and laid at rest; but in my opinion, it is very impious, and surely very ungrateful, thus to treat the first of blessings, without which judgment will be but a sour old maid, producing nothing. Let us marry them, and we shall do better; for it is evident neither of them was meant for the single state." p. 139.

During the two following years Mrs. Hamilton and her sister led a wandering life, visiting Wales, the lakes of Westmoreland, and Scotland; and in 1804 they transferred their residence to Edinburgh. She here became acquainted with Miss Edgeworth, and for her sister spirit she soon felt a cordial attachment. It is highly to the honour of both, and discovers the superior order of their minds, that those, who were competitors for the public favour, in the same path of exertion, should have felt for each other a friendship, which excluded the smallest feeling of rivalship or jealousy. In this year Mrs. Hamilton published Agrippina, and had the satisfaction of receiving a pension from the King, which was gratifying as it was unasked, and was conferred on her as an acknowledgment that her talents had been

meritoriously exerted in the cause of religion and virtue. In an interval of leisure from more important occupations, she wrote and printed *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*, a work which was popular with all classes, and extensively useful among those for whose benefit it was intended. "The humour of the work operating on the national pride, produced a wonderful spirit of improvement, and Mrs. M'Clarty's example *provoked* many a Scottish house-wife into cleanliness and good order."

She continued to reside in Edinburgh till 1812, enjoying with high relish the literary society with which the capital of Scotland abounds, but constantly subject to attacks of a very painful disorder, the gout, with which she had been afflicted for several years. She bore her infirmities, however, and observed the approaches of old age with placid good humour, and Christian fortitude; as an evidence of which, we extract the following amusing little poem, which becomes interesting when we are told that it was written by one, who was "exposed to all the evils attendant on a state of nervous irritability, who was incapable of that self-collected abstraction so useful in literary pursuits, and unfitted by the most trifling interruption from performing her diurnal task; who during some weeks or months of every winter, was almost wholly incapacitated for mental exertion, and in the most propitious season never could devote to her pen more than four or five hours of the day."

"Is that Auld Age that's tirling at the pin?
I trow it is,—then haste to let him in:
Ye're kindly welcome, friend; na, dinna fear
To shaw yoursel', ye'll cause nae trouble here.
I ken there are wha tremble at your name,
As though ye brought with ye reproach or shame;
And wha, 'o' thousand lies wad bear the sin,'
Rather than own ye for their kith or kin:
But far frae shirking ye as a disgrace,
Thankfu' I am t'have lived to see thy face;
Nor sall I ere disown ye, nor tak pride,
To think how long I might your visit bide,
Doing my best to mak ye weel respecked,
I'll no for your sake fear to be neglecked;
But now ye're come, and through a' kind of weather
We're doomed frae this time forth to jog thegither,
I'd fain mak compact wi' ye, firm and strang,
On terms of fair giff gaff to haud out lang;
Gin thou'lt be civil, I sall lib'ral be,
Witness the lang lang list o' what I'll gie.
First then, I here mak owre for gude and ay,
A' youthfu' fancies, whether bright or gay;

Beauties and graces, too, I wad resign them,
But sair I fear 'twad cost ye fash to find them;
For 'gainst your dady, Time, they could na stand,
Nor bear the grip o' his unsonsy hand;
But there's my skin, whilk ye may further crunkle,
And write your name at length in ilka wrunkle.
On my brown locks ye've leave to lay your paw,
And bleach them to your fancy white as snaw.
But look na, Age, sae wistfu' at my mouth,
As gin ye lang'd to pu' out ilka tooth!
Let them, I do beseech, still keep their places,
Though, gin ye wish't, ye're free to paint their faces
My limbs I yield ye; and if ye see meet
To clap your icy shackles on my feet,
I'se no refuse; but if ye drive out gout,
Will bless you for't, and offer thanks devout.
Sae muckle wad I gi' wi' right good will,
But och! I fear, that maer ye look for still.
I ken by that fell glow'r and meaning shrug,
Ye'd slap your skinny fingers on each lug;*
And unca fain ye are, I trow, and keen,
To cast your misty powders in my een;
But, O' in mercy, spare my poor wee twinkers,
And I for ay sall wear your chrystal blinkers!
Then bout my lugs I'd fain a bargain mak,
And gi' my hand, that I shall ne'er draw back.
Weel, then—wad ye consent their use to share,
'Twad serve us baith, and be a bargain rare.
Thus I wad ha't; when babbling fools intrude,
Gabbling their noisy nonsense, lang and loud;
Or when ill-nature weel brush'd up by wit,
Wi' sneer sarcastic takes its aim to hit;
Or when detraction, meanest slave o' pride,
Spies out wee faults, and seeks great worth to hide;
Then mak me deaf, as deaf as deaf can be;
At a' sic times my lugs I lend to thee.
But when in social hour ye see combin'd
Genius and Wisdom—fruits o' heart and mind,
Good-sense, good-humour, wit in playfu' mood,
And Candour e'en frae ill extracting good;
Oh, then auld friend, I maun ha' back my hearing,
To want it then wad be an ill past bearing.
Better to lonely sit i' the douf spence
Than catch the sough o' words without the sense:
Ye winna promise? Och ye're unko dour,
Sae ill to manage, and sae cauld and sour.

* For some years she had been occasionally subject to a slight degree of deafness.

Nae matter—hail and sound I'll keep my heart,
Nor frae a crum o't sall I ever part:
Its kindly warmth will ne'er be chill'd by a'
The cauldest breath your frozen lips can blaw.
Ye need na' fash your thum, auld carl, nor fret,
For there Affection shall preserve its seat;
And though to tak my hearing ye rejoice,
Yet spite o' you I'll still hear friendship's voice.
Thus, though ye tak the rest, it sha' na grieve me,
For ae blythe spunk o' spirits ye maun leave me;
And let me tell you in your lug, Auld Age,
I'm bound to travel wi' ye but ae stage.
Be't long or short, ye canna keep me back;
And, when we reach the end o't, ye maun pack;
For there we part forever; late or air,
Another guess companion meets me there;
To whom ye—nill ye will ye—maun me bring;
Nor think that I'll be wae, or laith to spring
Frae your poor dosen'd side, ye carl uncouth,
To the blest arms of everlasting youth.
By him, whate'er ye've rift'd, sto'wn, or ta'en,
Will a' be gi'en wi' interest back again:
Frost by a' gifts and graces, thousands moe
Than heart can think of, freely he'll bestoe.
Ye need na wonder, then, nor swell wi' pride,
Because I kindly welcome you, as guide
To ane sae far your better. Now a's tauld,
Let us set out upo' our journey cauld;
Wi' nae vain boasts, nor vain regrets tormented,
We'll e'en jog on the gate, quiet and contented."

Page 201, vol. I.

In 1812 the state of Mrs. Hamilton's health was such, that it was thought advisable for her to pass the winter in England, and during her tour in that country she finished and sent to the press her *Popular Essays on the Elementary Principles of the Human Mind*, which were intended as a supplement to her *Letters on Education*. From England she passed over to Ireland, and from thence returned to Edinburgh, where she remained till May 1816. She was then labouring under her last illness, and she was again induced to try the climate of England. Upon her arrival at Harrowgate, however, she became convinced that her malady was mortal, and prepared, with resignation, for the termination of her earthly existence. She expired on the 23d of July, 1816, having completed a life of 58 years.

There are few of either sex or of any class in society, who are blessed at once with the power and the inclination to do so much

good as was accomplished by this excellent woman. She had by nature a quick and strong understanding, an even and cheerful temper, and amiable feelings; and her course of conduct through life, was such as might be expected from one, who united to these qualities, a firm conviction of the truth and a just estimation of the importance of Christianity. Her religion was not sectarism, nor her morality pretence; the one was not lax, the other was not bigoted. Her writings abound with evidences of the purity and elevation of her principles of morals, and of the sincerity and warmth of her piety; and we cannot refrain from inserting the following just and discriminating tribute to the merit of Mrs. Hamilton, written by one, who, like her, has devoted great talents and much successful exertion to illustrate and apply the best principles of education. We present it to our readers with the more pleasure, as Miss Edgeworth has been subject to the imputation of indifference to the most important of all subjects, a charge, which we think the language of this letter goes far to disprove.

"The *Modern Philosophers*," says Miss Edgeworth, "the *Cottagers of Glenburnie*, and the *Letters of the Hindoo Rajah*, the first book, we believe, that our author published, have all been highly and steadily approved by the public. These works, alike in principle and in benevolence of design, but with each a different grace of style and invention, have established Mrs. Hamilton's character as an original, agreeable, and successful writer of fiction; but her claims to literary reputation as a philosophic, moral and religious author, are of a higher sort, and rest upon works of a more solid and durable nature—upon her works on education, especially her *Letters on Female Education*. In those, she not only shows that she has studied the history of the human mind, and that she has made herself acquainted with all that has been written on this subject by the best moral and metaphysical writers, but she adds new value to their knowledge, by rendering it practically useful. She has thrown open to all classes of readers, those metaphysical discoveries or observations, which had been confined chiefly to the learned. To a sort of knowledge, which had been considered rather as a matter of curiosity than of use, she has given real value and actual currency. She has shown how the knowledge of metaphysics can be made serviceable to the art of education. She has shown, for instance, how the doctrine of the Association of Ideas may be applied in early education to the formation of the habits of temper, and of the principles of taste and of morals: she has considered how all that metaphysicians know of sensation and abstraction, can be applied to the cultivation of the attention, the judgment, and the imagination of children. No matter how little is actually ascertained on these subjects: she has done much in awakening the attention of parents, of mothers especially, to future inquiry: she has done much by directing their inquiries

rightly—much by exciting them to reflect upon their own minds, and to observe what passes in the minds of their children: she has opened a new field of investigation to women—a field fitted to their domestic habits—to their duties as mothers, and to their business as preceptors of youth, to whom it belongs to give the minds of children those first impressions and ideas, which remain the longest, and which influence them often the most powerfully through the whole course of life. In recommending to her own sex the study of metaphysics, as far as it relates to education, Mrs. Hamilton has been judiciously careful to avoid all that can lead to that species of vain debate, of which there is no end: she, knowing the limits of the human understanding, does not attempt to go beyond them, into that which can be at best but a dispute about terms. She does not aim at making women expert in the wordy war; nor does she teach them to astonish the unlearned by their acquaintance with the various vocabulary of metaphysical system-makers; such jugglers' tricks she despised; but she has not, on the other hand, been deceived, or overawed, by those who would represent the study of the human mind as one that tends to no practical purpose, and that it is unfit and unsafe for her sex. Had Mrs. Hamilton set ladies on metaphysics merely to show their paces, she would have made herself and them ridiculous and troublesome; but she has shown how they may, by slow and certain steps, advance to a useful object. The dark, intricate, and dangerous labyrinth, she has converted into a clear, straight, and practicable road—a road not only practicable, but pleasant, and not only pleasant, but, what is of more consequence to women, safe.

"Mrs. Hamilton is well known to be not only a moral, but a pious writer; and in all her writings, as in all her conversation, religion appears in the most engaging point of view. Her religion was sincere, cheerful, and tolerant, joining in the happiest manner, Faith, Hope, and Charity. All who had the happiness to know this amiable woman will, with one accord, bear testimony to the truth of that feeling of affection, which her benevolence, kindness and cheerfulness of temper inspired. She thought so little of herself, so much of others, that it was impossible she could, superior as she was, excite envy: she put every body at ease in her company, in good humour and good spirits with themselves. So far from being a restraint on the young and lively, she encouraged by her sympathy their openness and gayety. She never flattered; but she always formed the most favourable opinion that truth and good sense would permit, of every individual, who came near her. Instead, therefore, of fearing and shunning her penetration, all loved and courted her society."

Vol. I. p. 208.

Those of Mrs. Hamilton's letters, which are interspersed in the Memoirs, and which compose the greater part of the second volume, amply confirm what is here said of her kind and amiable temper; and though we have already given liberal extracts, we

think that at least the better half of our readers will not be displeased to know more of one who was, in so many respects, an ornament and honour to their sex. The following paragraph describes with simplicity and truth the change which took place in her feelings upon removing from the retirement of Scotland to the crowded sphere of London.

"In the narrow circle in which it was my lot to move, I am conscious that I obtained a greater degree of notice and respect than I had any right to look for, considering that I stood in a manner alone—destitute of those ties of affinity, and family connexion, which are, in Scotland, the pillars of society. To obtain notice, however, neither was, nor, I trust, ever will be, my object. To be esteemed by those for whom I felt esteem—beloved by those for whom I felt affection, is the first and last wish of my heart; and that wish has never, in any part of my life, been ungratified. Next to the wish for esteem, is the desire of sympathy—sympathy in taste, in opinion, in sentiment. From this commerce of intellect, (if I may so call it) I felt myself excluded. It was my lot to meet with few, who understood the traffic; and of those few, almost with none who who would deign to exchange their precious ores for my unpolished pebbles. On coming to England, the scene was not only changed, but I found myself as if I had at once assumed a new character. Men of learning addressed themselves to me, as to a being who was actually capable of thinking. Men of wit seemed to imagine that I could understand them; and both men and women, very superior both in point of situation and abilities, to those with whom I had been accustomed to associate, conversed with me so much upon a footing of equality, that I was sometimes inclined to exclaim with the *wee wife*, 'Surely, *this is no me!*' Nor did this cease when we had the misfortune of losing *him* whose society was sufficiently attractive to account for our sharing in the honours that were so justly his due. In every place where my sister and I took up our residence, we found our society sought after, and our friendship solicited by some superior minds; and what renders those minds truly superior in my estimation is, that in their attentions to us, it was evidently *mind* alone that they valued. Our introductions bespoke us gentlewomen, and women of character; and that was sufficient. We owed all beyond formal civility to their own discernment. These good people, to whom I feel, I confess, a debt of gratitude, never had a notion of my writing a book." Vol. II. p. 33.

Mrs. Hamilton's good sense did not forsake her, or rather she did not think it necessary to lay it aside, even when she wrote upon religious subjects; and we consequently find in these volumes some most judicious and useful observations, on the principles of interpretation, which we wish could be indelibly imprinted on the mind of every man who reads his Bible. And we are

quite sure that were these principles universally adopted, it would prove the utter destruction of many of those parties, into which the Christian world is divided, and would do more than any thing else to introduce the "unity of the faith," which men have sought to establish, by such preposterous means as the threat of torture in this world, or of suffering in the next; by the strong arm of temporal power, or the stronger arm of spiritual domination.

"Experience and reflection alike convince me," says Mrs. Hamilton, "of the danger and impropriety of endeavouring to explain obscure expressions of abstract reasoning; or of taking any expression separately and apart, and by reasoning abstractly upon its apparent import, building a system of our own. When difficulties occur, I, therefore, endeavour to reconcile them, not to any particular and favourite theory, but to the general tenor and spirit of the author. My reasons for preferring this method are these:—In a translation, the general meaning of an author may be so well preserved, as to give us the clearest idea of the sense; but from the want of words in one language exactly adapted to convey the meaning of words in another, particular words or even sentences may be liable to perversion. Even in our own language, we find the ideas attached to general terms so vague and ill defined, as to be the cause of great confusion. The meaning of several words has, even in our own times, undergone considerable revolutions. The term *gay*, as an attribute of character, some years called up the ideas of innocent cheerfulness and vivacity: it now, when used as an epithet (in speaking of a gentleman) denotes the extreme of profligacy. The term *affront* in England denotes one set of ideas, and in Scotland it is the sign of another; and is, probably, now used there in the same sense it it was used two centuries ago in England. If this may happen in so short a time, can we imagine that the most able scholars are now capable of pronouncing with certainty on the particular associations attached to every general term, in languages that have long been obsolete? Impossible! It is by analogy and comparison alone that they can be any longer ascertained. But even so, the task is attended with insurmountable difficulties. In the customs and manners of every country there are peculiarities, which give rise to new combinations of ideas;—combinations, into which no stranger can enter. The words which denote these combinations can, therefore, only be intelligible to those who are familiar with the ideas they denote. With respect to the languages of antiquity, this is now impossible. To take, therefore, any one expression of any ancient writer, and to argue from it that he holds opinions contrary to the general tenor of his writings, is, in my opinion, doing injustice to the cause of truth. I do not believe that there is a doctrine, however absurd, which might not be established from isolated passages picked out on purpose. Yet this appears to me to have been generally the course pursued by those, who having embraced with ardour the speculative

opinions of any particular sect, search the scriptures for confirmation of their peculiar doctrines. No book in the New Testament has been more frequently applied to in this way than St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In my examination of its contents, I shall pursue a different plan. Firmly believing the apostle's mission to be from God, and persuaded that what he taught as the doctrines of Christianity to the disciples of former times, is still of universal application, it is with humble diffidence, but conscientious integrity, that I presume to *set about* the momentous task. Still, however, persuaded that I ought to use my own reason, I shall use it, *though not in pride or in presumption.*" Vol. II. p. 195.

We are sorry that we cannot bestow a similar commendation upon what she has written on the Revelation of St. John. She seems to have taken up an hypothesis with relation to this very obscure and difficult book, without sufficient consideration, and apparently without a proper acquaintance with the labours of others upon it. She says nothing of the doubts that have been entertained of its genuineness, but seems to regard it as unquestionably the work of St. John. She considers it as an emblematical representation of the contest, which in different periods of the world, and in every stage of society, is taking place between virtue and vice. "The Christian life," she says, "is represented by St. Paul as a warfare, and in the same figurative language, we are told by him what sort of armour we ought to put on, when we engage in it. By St. John, it appears to me, that we are warned concerning the enemies with which we have to combat." She justifies her view of it by such reasoning as this; that the kingdom of the Messiah is not of this world; that from the commencement of his reign, to the consummation of his glory, all is spiritual; that to the disciple of Jesus, the rise and fall of empires, events, which, though they deeply affect the temporal happiness of multitudes, have no influence on their spiritual state, must appear matters of trivial importance, and are no longer to be viewed as the subjects of revelation; and, in conformity with this representation, that, though our Saviour was ever ready graciously to instruct his disciples in spiritual things, he instantly checked their curiosity, when it led to inquiry after temporal events.

We may say of her mode of explanation, as Le Clerc observed of that proposed by Hammond, that "it may perhaps be defended as easily as any other;" yet there are some difficulties and inconsistencies, which we have not room to point out, and must leave to the sagacity of those, into whose hands her tract may fall. But if any should think her system plausible, we should recommend it to them to consult some of the many other expo-

sitions, which have been given of this intricate book, and when they are weary with the unsuccessful attempts to elucidate its obscurity, they may, perhaps, determine to remain satisfied with what is to be found in it that is plain and practical, and to acquiesce in the best of all solutions, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

ARTICLE V.

1. *Memoirs of the Life of Richard Price, D.D.* By William Morgan, F.R.S. London, 1816.
2. *Sermons on Various Subjects, by the late* Richard Price, D.D. F.R.S.

We have been accustomed to regard the character of Dr. Price with sentiments of veneration. He was distinguished as a philosopher and a divine; and for his still more enviable pre-eminence in moral worth. It is impossible to read his works without respect, not only for the intellectual power they exhibit, but for the singular simplicity, sincerity, and candour, that pervade them, and which from the testimony of his co-temporaries no less than from this strong internal evidence, seem to have been the uniform spirit of his life. Any man, who has exhibited to any considerable degree these rare, but most estimable virtues, may with advantage be held up as an example. For they are the fair indications of a superiour mind; they are among the choicest helps in the attainment of truth, and constitute some of the finest ingredients of the christian character.

The memoirs of Dr. Price, of which in connexion with the volume of his posthumous sermons we propose some notice, are published by his nephew, who from twenty-two years of personal acquaintance undoubtedly enjoyed favourable opportunities of knowing his uncle's character; and we could have wished, that he had transfused more of his uncle's amiable temper through his work. We particularly regret the disproportionate attention the author has bestowed upon the political views and history of Dr. Price; not only because he has indulged a rancour and asperity ill becoming the subject of his memoirs, but because the events that might have given them importance, have lost much of their interest with the progress of time, and it is as unneces-

sary, as we deem it unfair, to exhibit such a philanthropist and divine as "giving to party what was meant for mankind." There are also in the course of the work some insinuations of a personal nature, (affecting in one instance particularly the character of an eminent scholar and christian,) which we read with nothing but disgust.

Richard Price was a native of Wales, born in 1723; and his father was minister of a congregation of Protestant Dissenters within the county of Glamorgan. The circumstances of his early education might have seemed little propitious to the character, and particularly to the religious views, which he afterwards maintained; but probably they were most effectual of all others in forming them. His father was a zealous Calvinist, and "so bigoted was he to his creed, that one day finding his son reading Dr. Samuel Clarke's sermons, he flung the book in a rage into the fire, with a most bitter invective against his want of faith and orthodoxy."

It seems indeed that from his earliest youth "the religious principles of young Price were very different from his father," and though we will not adopt here the language of his biographer, which we cannot but regard as unwarrantably severe, yet it seems probable, that to this circumstance is partly at least to be ascribed, that the paternal estate was chiefly bequeathed to an elder son, and that Richard was cast upon the world and Providence.

"But his mother" (and we quote this passage not only as it furnishes an evidence of his filial piety, but as another proof of the influence of the maternal character in forming distinguished minds) "was a most generous and excellent woman. He attended her with his sisters in her last moments, and has often expressed his admiration of the tranquillity, with which she viewed the approaches of death and the prospects of a better world." p. 8. Without attaching more importance than is due to such a consideration, we may believe, that the recollection of her cheerful hopes helped to establish those bright and reviving views of futurity, which are developed with such sublimity and beauty in various passages of his works.

"In the autumn, which succeeded his mother's death, having now attained his eighteenth year, it was determined in compliance with his own wishes, and the advice of his paternal uncle, the Rev. Samuel Price, who officiated as co-pastor with Dr. Isaac Watts, that he should be removed to a dissenting academy in London. Having no means of conveyance, as he then lived with his two sisters, who were no better provided for than himself, he had recourse to his brother, the heir of his father's fortune, who supplied him with an horse

to carry himself and a servant as far as Cardiff, a distance of twenty miles, from whence he was left to trudge on foot with his bundle in his hand to Bristol, a further distance of forty miles. But, luckily for him, a good natured lady, seeing a youth in this forlorn condition walking over rough and dirty roads, took him into her carriage a part of the way, and so far relieved him of his fatigue and sorrow. From Bristol, he set off in a conveyance, which, to the best of my recollection he told me, was no other than a broad-wheeled waggon." p. 8, 9.

Such were the difficulties, with which he was called to struggle in early youth; and which have been the lot of many, who have attained the highest distinction, in honor and virtue. The history of such difficulties, thus faithfully endured and surmounted, cannot but be as useful as it is interesting. They offer the best encouragement to youthful effort; and are to be regarded as the wise discipline of Providence to mature character and to prepare for eminent usefulness.

"Immediately on his arrival in London he was admitted into the Academy founded by Mr. Coward and lodged by his uncle, at whose expense he was chiefly maintained at *the house of a barber* in Pudding-lane. In this close and confined abode, which was rendered more noxious from the want of those ordinary conveniences, which are necessary to health and cleanliness, he pursued his studies with the most unremitting zeal and delight." p. 9, 10.

When he had completed his education at the academy, he removed to Stoke-Newington, where he resided for near thirteen years in the family of Mr. Streatfield, as his chaplain and companion. While here he commenced his public career as a preacher, officiating in different congregations, and particularly in the Old Jewry, of which the learned and venerable Dr. Chandler was then pastor. At first his preaching appears to have been very popular, but yielding to the incautious advice of some friends, (for we reject with indignation the insinuation of Mr. Morgan) he fell into a too composed and inanimate delivery, which however it may be overlooked by judicious hearers, who are more attentive to the thought than to the manner, can never be attractive to a promiscuous assembly, and is sometimes fatal to the success of the most intelligent and learned theologians. From this source, united with his natural susceptibility, he suffered much depression of spirits. Both at Newington Green, a small village near London, and at Jewry Lane, where he succeeded Dr. Benson, as evening preacher, his hearers were very few. And he was so discouraged, "that he had determined to give up preaching altogether, from an idea, that his talents were totally unfit for the

office of a public speaker." Yet we have learnt from some, who were his constant hearers, that this entire calmness and simplicity of manner, coupled with his affectionate and devotional spirit, gave an interest to his public services, which they had never found exceeded; and it is certain, that from the time he became pastor of the congregation at Hackney in 1769, he was distinguished as a most impressive and interesting preacher.

Dr. Price made his first appearance as an author in 1757, in his work, entitled "a Review of the principal questions and difficulties in Morals, particularly those relating to the original of our ideas of Virtue, its nature, foundation," &c. This work, which is written with great ability, advanced the author at once to a most respectable rank among moral and metaphysical writers, and has been acknowledged by all capable of appreciating its value, as one of the ablest ethical works in the English language. In 1767 he published four Dissertations, on Providence, on Prayer, On the reasons for expecting that virtuous men will meet after death in a state of happiness, and lastly, On the nature of historical evidence and miracles. In these dissertations philosophy and piety are admirably combined. They may be read with great advantage by Christians of all denominations, and we wish for the cause of piety, and for the consolation of sorrow, that they were widely circulated.

Perhaps it may not be remembered, that Dr. Price was formally invited by our Congress to become a citizen of the United States. As it is the only part of his political history, to which we refer, we think our readers may be gratified with the following extracts, one of which will be recognized as the production of a late esteemed minister of this town.

"The honest and ardent zeal, with which Dr. Price had defended the rights of America, and the great financial skill which he had displayed in his different publications, induced the Congress of the United States, as well in testimony of their gratitude as in the hope of availing themselves of his abilities, to send him a formal invitation to come and reside among a people, who knew how to appreciate his talents, and would be happy to see them exerted in their behalf. In the winter of 1778, the following letter, containing the resolution of Congress, was transmitted to him from their ambassador in France."

Passy, near Paris, Dec. 7, 1778.

SIR,

By one of the latest ships from America, we had the pleasure of receiving from Congress an attested copy of their resolution of the sixth of October, in these words:

In Congress, Oct. 6, 1778.

Resolved, That the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Esquires, or any one of them, be directed forthwith to apply to Dr. Price, and inform him, that it is the desire of Congress to consider him as a citizen of the United States, and to receive his assistance in regulating their finances.—That if he shall think it expedient to remove with his family to America, and afford such assistance, a generous provision shall be made for requiting his services.

CHARLES THOMPSON, *Secretary.*

From a great respect to the character of Dr. Price, we have much satisfaction in communicating this resolution. If your answer should be in the affirmative, you may depend upon us to discharge the expences of your journey and voyage, and for every assistance in our power to make your passage agreeable, as well as your reception and accommodation in our country. We have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and respect, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servants.

B. FRANKLIN,
ARTHUR LEE,
JOHN ADAMS.

Dr. Price,

In answer to the official invitation of the American commissioners, Dr. Price sent the following note, inclosed in a private letter to Mr. Lee.

Newington Green, Jan. 19, 1779.

Dr. Price returns his best thanks to the honourable Dr. Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams, Esquires, for conveying to him the resolution of Congress of the 6th of October last, by which he is invited to become a member of the American states, and his assistance is desired in regulating their finances. It is not possible for him to express the sense he has of the honour this resolution does him, and the satisfaction, with which he reflects on the favourable opinion of him, which has occasioned it. But he knows himself to be ill qualified for giving such assistance, and he is also so connected in this country, and so advanced in the evening of life, that he cannot think of a removal. He requests the favour of the honourable commissioners to transmit this reply to Congress, with assurances, that he feels the warmest gratitude for the notice taken of him, and that he looks to the United States as now the hope, and likely soon to become the refuge of mankind. p. 75—80.

In addition to this, it appears from several letters received from his friends in America, that he had long been requested to favour them with his advice in regard to the formation of their new governments. And in answer to their request, he wrote a pamphlet containing observations on the importance of the Ame-

rican Revolution, and much valuable advice on the means of securing those liberties, for which they had successfully contended. The following is an extract on this subject from the late Rev. John Clark, of Boston, whom many of us remember with affection and respect.

"Your late publication is a noble testimony of that affection you have always professed for these States. We are all sensible of the honour you have done us, and gratefully acknowledge our obligation. Dr. Chauncy is delighted with the work. Your chapter on liberal inquiry cannot be sufficiently admired. I think it has already liberated some minds. May it be candidly read by all, and may you have the exalted happiness of seeing rational Christianity flourish by your labours. p. 106—7.

In no mention of the labors of Dr. Price should we forget his work on Annuities, and the method of calculating the value of assurances on lives. In this work his fine talents were exerted in a manner perfectly congenial to the benevolence of his heart; for we are told by another of his biographers, that "the advice and instruction contained in this book were peculiarly seasonable, as various societies professedly for the benefit of aged persons and widows, were at that time continually rising up, which, as they were founded on false principles, threatened to be productive of the most serious distress, and that to his intelligent and kind exertions, the prosperity of the "Society for Equitable Insurances," on which the happiness and even existence of thousands are to this day continually depending, is almost entirely owing. It was thus that this excellent man made all his labors and all his powers subservient to the good of his fellow-creatures.

The domestic character of Dr. Price was all that might have been expected from his natural amiableness and the strictness of his christian principles. He married in 1757, and in all his relations was distinguished by the tenderness and fidelity of his friendship. He was ready to every call of kindness; nor were his offices of love confined to his family and personal friends. His biographer tells us, "that his hours of study and retirement were frequently broken in upon for assistance and advice, especially in matters relating to annuities and life insurances; and that in this way he sacrificed much of his personal convenience to individuals, of whom he knew but little, and from whom he would accept of no pecuniary recompense. A fifth part of his annual income was regularly devoted to charitable purposes: and he was anxious to distribute it in such a way, as might produce the greatest good. Simplicity and humility were among the strongly marked features of his character. No man was ever apparently less sensible of his own excellencies, nor less elated by his own celebrity; and in

no man was the dignity of artless manners and unaffected modesty more happily displayed. His face was the true index of his mind. It beamed with philanthropy, and when lighted up in conversation with his friends, assumed an aspect peculiarly pleasing."

Toward the close of life he was visited with severe personal and domestic affliction. His wife, who for a period of twenty years had been in a state of great weakness, and whom he watched with most faithful and affectionate assiduity, died in 1786: and in 1791 he was seized with a fever, the effects of a severe cold, which he took in attending the funeral of a friend; and soon after was attacked by a very painful disorder, by which he had been many years threatened. This he bore with fortitude and resignation, though occasionally his spirits and strength were entirely exhausted by the agonies he endured. He died in May 1791, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, leaving behind him a beautiful example of Christian meekness, purity, and simplicity, and of admirable powers consecrated to the purest purposes of truth and usefulness.

We turn with pleasure from the Memoirs, which, though exhibiting undoubtedly the most essential facts in the life of Dr. Price, seem to us a very inadequate exhibition of his character, to the admirable Sermons, to which we have already referred. And here we cordially acknowledge our obligations to the biographer for the favour he has conferred on the religious community by their publication. They are worthy, we think, of being ranked with the best examples of pulpit instruction: distinguished for their simplicity and good sense, and abounding in rich and valuable thought on some of the most important subjects of religion. In some of them are to be found examples of eloquence of the highest order, the effusions of an heart, deeply penetrated by the importance and duty of christian truth and virtue, and earnestly desirous of extending their power.

The subjects of these discourses are chiefly practical and devotional; or if, as in a few, the subject be of a more argumentative nature, our author never fails to convert it to a practical use. And indeed of what value are any religious theories, any, even the most ingenious speculations on doctrines, which have not some influence on religious conduct? With such a principle established, every topic connected with christianity may be made interesting and useful: and without it, the sublimest truths may become barren and unedifying.

The second sermon in this collection is on "The analogy between our present state and a state of childhood;" which the author illustrates by remarking, that "our pursuits, our cares, our

sorrows, and our joys, are too often like those of children, low, trifling, and frivolous; that our present existence, compared with our future, is a childhood in respect of its duration; in respect of our improvement, and of our power and dignity; and more especially as the present life is a state of education for another and a higher." The reflections deduced from this subject are in the highest degree solemn and important.

In the third and fourth discourses, the preacher proposes from that important text, Matt. vii. 21, "Not every one, that saith unto me, Lord, Lord," &c. to establish the greater importance of right practice than of a sound faith in religion. This is a sentiment, on which some very vague and erroneous representations have been made; but let those, who are so ready to reproach it as implying indifference to truth, attend to the following reasoning:

"A sincere disposition to receive whatever information God is pleased to give us, may be considered as equivalent in all cases to right belief. It is an assent, already prepared to whatever doctrines God has revealed; and contains all the merit there can be in the actual reception of them. A person, who takes the New Testament for the rule of his faith, and studies to form his opinions by it, may be said to believe whatever is revealed. By receiving the book that contains such doctrines, he give a virtual assent to them; and by meaning and endeavouring to extend his faith as far as God requires, or reason and evidence will warrant, he possesses all that is necessary or valuable in faith.

"As the determination of the will to righteousness is the whole of genuine virtue, and the very thing that constitutes virtue in every action, so the determination of the mind to truth is the whole of genuine faith, and the very thing that gives faith its worth in every point. The faith of some may be more just than the faith of others, or it may include in it more articles; but as long as all have nothing but truth ultimately in view, they are all pursuing the same end, and have all one object of zeal and attachment.

"You may observe, that I always speak on the supposition, that our desire to know God's will is attended with faithful endeavours to discover it. An affection to truth, that does not put us upon doing our best to find it out, can be nothing but a vain pretence; and if any one neglects the proper means to inform his judgment, or is criminally hasty or careless in his inquiries, he is so far blameable and guilty. But then I must beg leave to say, *that such a person is equally blameable, whether in consequence of such causes he happens to embrace truth or error.* All depends on the intention and bent of the heart. Where this is turned towards truth, wrong opinions will be accepted, as if they were right; and on the contrary, where the heart is not thus turned, right opinions will be condemned as if they were false. In this, as in all other instances, the will is accepted for the deed. In the soul, where an affection to virtue reigns, God

sees every latent virtue, that has not yet been called into action; and in the understanding, where the desire of knowing God's will reigns, he sees every part of the system of faith, to which through misapprehension or ignorance, the assent has not been given.

For it should be remembered, that the very purpose of all religious principles is to produce that temper of mind, which I am recommending, and that their worth consists entirely in their tendency to this. Where this temper is found, there the end of religious truth is attained, and nothing more can be essential. Seek this then in the first place. Seek above all things humility, sincerity, piety, and right practice, and then be satisfied, that you have reached the very excellence, to which all doctrines should bring you, and without which, the most extensive faith is nothing but a system of notions floating in the head, and leaving the soul miserable." p. 63.

Having stated the necessity and reasonableness of such a principle, partly from the consideration, that on any other, our salvation must be connected with things out of our power, and on which our wills could have no influence—on the soundness of our heads—and not on the sincerity of our hearts; and having urged the numberless diversities of religious opinions, that prevail among mankind, leaving it impossible for us to infer, that the divine favour is to be confined to only one set of these opinions, especially as experience shows us, that there are good men of all persuasions; he proceeds,

"You will perhaps ask me on this occasion, Are there then no essential doctrines? Is it indifferent what opinions we hold? I answer, that I have by no means intended to assert this. There is without doubt an important difference between doctrines. Some are absurd, and some are reasonable. Some are liable to be abused to licentiousness; and others have a tendency to promote true goodness. It is our duty to reject the former, and, as far as we can, to receive only the latter. There are particular points of faith, and modes of worship, to which I think myself bound to adhere at the expense of all my worldly possessions. He, that does not follow what *appears to him* to be truth and reason, contradicts his conscience and hazards his own salvation. I do not therefore mean to exhort you to any indifference with respect to the part you should take in religion, or to the opinion you shall adopt. Though I insist, that *our acceptance does not depend on our taking always the right side*; yet I insist also, that it does depend on our *taking always that side, which appears to us to be right*, and not leaving ourselves to be carried away carelessly to a conformity in religion, that our hearts disapprove." p. 68.

It is among the excellencies of these discourses, that in them some of the most obvious and familiar topics are rendered highly interesting without the least effort for originality, or the least de-

parture from plain good sense; and we see, that the reason, why such topics have become familiar, is, because of all others they are the most important. This is a most valuable gift in a religious instructor. If his aim is to be useful, the most obvious will be the most frequent themes of his discourses. He will not be solicitous for the dangerous distinction of originality on subjects, the principles of which have been thoroughly established, and on which the passion for novelty might only betray into error, or might at least impair the influence of truth. The tinsel, with which some think to adorn religious instruction, is almost as injurious in its effects as error itself; and we entirely accord with the sentiment of an able critic, that the indifference, or practical incredulity so often to be observed among men on the subjects of revelation, is most effectually to be overcome by powerful reasoning and serious exhortation, and more likely to be increased than abated by the trick of rhetoric: that instead of being ready to overlook the art of the orator, we are in this instance rather on the watch to discover it; and that if once he appears to be employing artifice, his influence with us is at an end. Indeed nothing in itself is more unseemly, nothing more completely opposed to the spirit of religion, than affectation in any of its forms or degrees in the pulpit. Dr. Price has furnished a fine specimen of perfect simplicity combined with energy and strength; he has shewn us how well the plainest truths may be delivered, and how also they may be felt to give them all authority. Many examples might be adduced, but we select only the following from a sermon on the common, but important subject of "Contentment."

"Remember, that all the determinations of God's providence are under the direction of unerring and perfect reason. It is not possible, that He should dispose of us amiss, or permit us to suffer for a moment under any real grievance. No pain, which (considered in its reference to his administration) is improper, can exist. No advantage, or relief, which rectitude requires him to grant, can be denied us. No event can take place, which he, as the supreme arbiter of all events, ought to have excluded; and this is just as certain, as that he is a righteous and benevolent being. Nothing can place the unreasonableness of discontent in a stronger light than these considerations. They shew, that it is the folly of repining at what is best, the impiety of charging the Deity with doing wrong,—the baseness of desiring that the perfect order, which governs nature, should be broken. The course of things is right, beyond the possibility of correction. The constitution of the universe is just what the best informed benevolence could wish it to be; and were we wise enough, we should mind nothing but exhibiting in our own conduct that righteousness, which governs the world, take up our rest in God at

all times, under the full conviction, that the final issue of events will be productive of the greatest possible good." p. 91.

"Again, consider the state of the world about you, and the design and nature of the present state. From the happiness allotted us, there are deductions and abatements. Wisdom and goodness require these abatements; and without them, it is certain, that the absolute quantity of our happiness would have been less than it is. From the cottage up to the throne—from feeble infancy to decrepid old age, there are various pains and uneasinesses, which it is neither fit nor possible that we should escape. There is no condition of life perfectly happy; no pleasures free from every alloy. The nature of the present state does not admit of it, and we should learn to take our state as it is. On a sea, that would stagnate, were there no wind or waves, is it reasonable to expect, or even to wish never to be tossed? In a situation, where showers of arrows are flying around us, can we reckon upon being never wounded? Amidst the general crosses and sufferings of our race, can we look for an exemption? Think, whenever discouraged by disappointments, vexed by calumny, or depressed by sickness, that you are only suffering a common lot. Look about you, and survey the condition of others. Is there a human being, that enjoys an uniform happiness, whose hours pass on always without disturbance, who never is tried by any sorrows, never feels any distress, or suffers any pangs? Could you find such a being, you would find, that his exemption was a calamity to him, and that the singularity of his case only made him less a gainer by his existence. But no such case can be found. All are sufferers in some way or other. Many labour under great calamities, and some under calamities, with which petty evils will bear no comparison. Did we attend more to this, and instead of envying those above us, turn our eyes to the millions below us, we should be always more disposed to praise than to complain. When you are suffering under any pain, or your temper is fretted by any misfortune, think of those, who at the same time are just reduced by a bankruptcy from opulence and comfort to penury and want; of those, who are then burning in a fever, rotting in a dungeon, or perishing in a shipwreck." p. 100.

The most able and eloquent sermon however in the collection is that on the eternally-improving happiness of the righteous in a future state. After some very striking views of the nature of the soul, and its destination to immortality, he says, in answer to the supposed inquiry, Must not an eternal duration some time or other become tedious? Shall we not find employment wanted for our faculties, and the funds of happiness exhausted? There are in the works and perfections of God and in infinite truth, inexhaustible sources of employment and happiness. Think of the extent of God's works. These are probably boundless, and all that our imaginations are capable of conceiving, must fall unspeakably short of their real extent and magnificence. The

scenes of being and bliss in the distant worlds and systems, with which the starry heavens are filled, are more grand and more various than we have powers to comprehend. Beyond the starry heavens, new plans of existence and new exhibitions of almighty wisdom may take place, still more glorious and incomprehensible; nor may there be any limits to the gradations and varieties of order, and beauty, and excellence in the universe. In studying the laws and constitution of this immense universe—in scanning its wonders—acquainting ourselves with its history—and in learning the scheme of eternal providence, we shall have enough to employ us forever. We are destined for a world, where we have room for expatiating without end; and such is the nature of an intelligent mind, that it cannot get to a point of perfection, beyond which it is incapable of going. Our immortal souls admit of an endless variety of ideas and sensations, which are now incomprehensible to us; they have many powers and faculties now dormant, which will hereafter shew themselves; many sorts of pleasure and bliss now concealed, which will hereafter be opened. Such is the substance of the author's reasoning. We quote only the following:

"What I have said may be applied to all the orders of virtuous being in the universe. The whole creation is continually improving and brightening under the eye and care of their Almighty Parent. Those, who are now lowest, will in time get the place of the highest; while these in the mean time will be getting still higher. We ourselves are at present in the lowest rank of reasonable creatures, but we are to ascend. This life is the infancy of our being; and if what I have said is true, a time must come, when we shall see angels below us. To be always growing wiser and greater—to be rising and improving forever—what a prospect is this! how amazing—how glorious. In no period of our existence shall we able to conceive what we shall be in the periods beyond it, and while always enjoying unspeakable happiness, we shall never know what happiness still greater we shall enjoy." p. 320.

Dr. Price, as is well known, and as repeatedly appears in the course of this volume, was a believer in the annihilation of the wicked; that they are raised at the resurrection only to die eternally; "like a plant, crushed in the seed, to be lost and undone." And in concluding his glowing picture of the eternal improvement and felicity of the righteous, he contrasts with it the danger of *losing our existence* and of being struck out of the creation of God; declaring, that "with the strictest propriety sin is denominated an infinite evil, as it ruins an immortal nature; and blasts an existence, that might be perpetually improving. We have only to object to this sentiment, that the language of scripture, with pos-

sibly two or three exceptions, seems strongly to imply a continued existence in suffering as the doom of the wicked: and that alarming and tremendous as is the thought of their extinction, effectual as the motive would appear to deter from sin, we need more evidence before we can receive it. But we must indulge no further in the remarks we proposed. We hope the copious extracts we have made, may excite the attention of our readers to this volume; and that it may be speedily published in this country. We regret, that there is not more encouragement for the frequent publication among us of devotional and practical books. None are suited to do more good. The mind and heart cannot surely be better exercised than on the great subjects of practical religion; and it would be happy indeed for the readers of these sermons, if, while they were dwelling with admiration on the power and beauty with which the duties and prospects of Christianity are here illustrated, they could catch from the author a portion of the childlike simplicity, affection, and piety, which were the distinguished ornaments of his life.

ARTICLE VI.

Tracts published by the Christian Tract Society, London, and republished by WELLS AND LILLY.

1. *William's Return; or, Good News for Cottagers.* By MARY HUGHES.
2. *Henry Goodwin, or the Contented Man.*
3. *Village Dialogues.* Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. By the same Author.

MEN are influenced in their conduct by different motives, according to their natural dispositions and capacities, their rank in life, the associations and habits they form, their education, and a variety of other circumstances, the influence of which we cannot appreciate. One man is induced to follow a particular course of conduct, by his love of what is just and equitable; another, by his feelings of benevolence and compassion; another can only be moved by a regard to his personal advantage, and another will comply simply from an easiness of disposition and a desire to oblige. All may take the same path, perform the same actions, and compass the same ends: but all set out from different motives, and are carried forward by different feelings. One man fights bravely in battle from mere natural intrepidity and love of action, a second from the desire of distinction and military pro-

motion, a third from fear of the shame and disgrace, which are the inevitable punishments of cowardice and desertion, and a fourth mechanically, without emotion of any kind, from the influence of habit and rigid discipline. Each of these, in an engagement, may perform equally well the duties of a good soldier; but if a good soldier could only be made by one set of motives, how few of mankind could ever be fitted for the profession.

Every man has his peculiarities of character, and therefore requires a peculiar combination of causes to operate upon his mind. Individuals are as clearly distinguished in this particular, as in the different combinations and expressions of their features; and the same general observation is true of classes and communities of men. Occupations and professions give to those engaged in them a specific, moral and intellectual physiognomy: rank, wealth, and power produce on the habits and feelings of those who possess them, an effect which marks them, as distinctly as their external relations, from the poor, the humble or the abject. Nations are not more clearly separated by the boundaries of nature, than by the imperishable distinctions of national character. All these varieties necessarily require a corresponding variety in the motives by which they are influenced. Exhort a soldier of Mahomet to fight for the rights of man—the liberties of his species; you talk of things he does not understand. But tell him of the rewards of his sensual paradise, and of an inevitable necessity in the course of human events, and he is persuaded; he feels the force of the motives which you present, and will lay down his life under their influence.

It is only by an attention to these circumstances, that any great and permanent effects can be produced on the mass of mankind. By applying to every class of men, and, when necessary, to every individual of those classes, the motives adapted to their peculiar feelings and habits, we may induce them all to unite in an object, to which we never could have brought them, had the same general means been employed with regard to all. This principle, carried imperceptibly into operation, has enabled some extraordinary men to obtain and exercise a vast influence over mankind, both in religion and in politics, and to produce immense alterations in the condition of their fellow-men. This is the secret, which gives to some that unaccountable faculty of always effecting their own ends, without the apparent possession of uncommon talent, or energy, or address. The power of making use of this principle to advantage, is a consequence of what we call a knowledge of the world, a knowledge of mankind. It affords us the means of compassing important ends, which could not be otherwise effected; of exerting a practical influence over mankind as indi-

viduals or as societies, which could never be done by general reasoning, or the arguments of the soundest philosophy.

We can only teach others, by associating that, which we would teach, with something which already exists in their minds. We must adapt our precepts to the comprehensions of different individuals, and enforce their observance by motives, of which they can respectively feel the power. This principle does not seem to have been sufficiently regarded by those Christians, who have adopted what we consider rational views of religion. These views are the result of the calm dispassionate inquiry of cautious and intellectual men, who have rejected all those opinions, which have their only foundation in the whims, the prejudices, the passions, or the superstitions of men. But how are *they* to disseminate their views, let them be ever so just, if they can only be recommended by the simple and cool examinations of scripture? They must be taught in close connexion with those parts of religion, which affect the feelings and the heart, before they can find their way to the great majority of mankind. Many can be taught to feel and comprehend the character of the Deity, to revere his benevolence and purity, to experience gratitude for his mercies—scarce one of whom could comprehend the metaphysical questions with respect to his mode of existence. Where there is one who can make up his opinion fairly on the nature of Christ's mediation, and the connexion of his sufferings and death with the salvation of man, there are thousands, who can praise God for the joy and hope they daily experience, founded on their belief in that connexion, and in that mediation.

These considerations are of great importance in enforcing the practical duties of christianity; in this point of view, the adaptation of motives and inducements to the character of those whom we wish to influence, appears of the utmost consequence. Not that the merit of an action is by any means the same, let the motives from which it proceeds be what they may;—purity of mind and principle are the very essentials of religion. But how are we to induce men to attempt acquiring this internal purity of character? How are we to persuade them—governed as they are by their passions, swayed by selfish interests, careless of futurity, and narrowing their views to the sphere of action which the present world affords—how are we to persuade them to relinquish every thing which has now the power to interest, and cling only to the hopes, which a distant and indistinct futurity discloses? We have first of all to make them realize, that the subject actually concerns them, and is in fact one of considerable importance; and it is not so easy a matter as it might be thought, to convince *those* of this truth, who have always listened regularly to the

public ministrations of religion without applying them for a moment to themselves, like some who pass their whole lives amid the most sublime scenery of nature, without once having it enter their minds, that they are objects for attention or admiration. We have to make men feel that to be a subject of the greatest importance, which they know has no direct bearing upon what they have been accustomed to consider the principal object of their lives. With such views as these, we cannot expect to purify them at once. The human character is not to be changed but by gradual and persevering efforts; old habits, old prejudices, passions long indulged, are to be eradicated before the Christian graces can take root and flourish. We must be content with slow but certain advances. We must induce men to act rightly, even if we cannot make their hearts pure; for we have reason to feel confident, from what we know of human nature, that correct actions will finally beget internal purity.

But since there is so great a variety in the pursuits and characters of men, it is not rational to expect, that the same style of exhortation and persuasion should influence every class of those who need instruction. Is it sufficient, at first setting out, to offer the purity, the moral sublimity, the reasonableness of Christianity, to *all*, as inducements to follow its dictates? We might thus expect to interest one kind of hearers, but surely not all. To be affected by pure and lofty motives, men must be *already* of a pure and lofty character. To be influenced by that which is reasonable, men must be in the perfect use of reason; must be freed from the shackles of prejudice and passion which so often impede its exercise. The virtue of the good may be elevated and confirmed; the conviction of the intellectual revived and corroborated by such views; but we cannot expect that the sinner should be startled, or the sluggish convinced. Talk to such a one—if poor and discontented—of the vanity of worldly riches—their insufficiency to give enjoyment; of the frailty of the foundation of human pride—its emptiness and its folly—he will think you are mocking him. He will not, he cannot believe you; his experience contradicts you, in his sense of things—and to what else can you appeal, for his feelings are not those of a Christian? In his sense, worldly riches are not vain, for they will give him the enjoyments he covets. Human pride is not frail, for it can trample on the rights of the humble and the poor, and he has perhaps felt it spurn him to the earth. He sees the wealthy rolling in splendour, sparkling with at least the outside show of pleasure—and how does he know that, in spite of the gay smile or careless laugh, the heart may be wrung with anguish or distorted with care? They have not *his* troubles, how does he know

they have any? Nor can we hope to allay the tumult of undisciplined passions by the still small voice of religious humility. The mild precepts of religious forbearance could be urged with but little effect on one, whose heart was burning with anger, or corroded by hatred. When the tempest has abated and the flood retired, we may set up our landmarks and fortify them against future encroachments; but we cannot preach forbearance to the winds and the waves when the storm is in all its fury.

The true christian character is only one; but the deviations from it are many. There is only one right path, but we may go astray from it in a thousand different directions. It is not enough that we distinctly teach what that path is; we should be able to tell every one how to regain it, when he has wandered, and afford him encouragement and confidence in the attempt. Our moral disorders, like those of our physical frame, assume a great variety of characters. The physician who should endeavour to remedy every variation from health by the same method of treatment, would not be more unsuccessful, than the moralist, who fails to adapt his instructions to the peculiarities of those whom he addresses.

It must be obvious, that the same kind of public instructions cannot be beneficial to every kind of hearers; and not only this, but farther, that they *alone* are not sufficient to produce that improvement of character which it is the object of religion to effect. We are not insensible to the immense importance of public preaching, and do not deny it to be of more consequence than any other *single* means of promoting religion. But a considerable proportion of mankind require much preparation, to fit them for the reception of religious impressions from the exercises of the sabbath; and they require also that means should be used to follow up those impressions, and ensure their application, to the details of life. The mass of men are slow to perceive the practical deductions to be drawn from any course of general reasoning or even didactic instruction, and still slower in making the application to real events. General descriptions of our duties, general directions and exhortations to their performance, do not alone produce an effect sufficiently specific or personal to influence all. Something is wanted to impress it upon our convictions, that we *personally*, *individually*, are to perform these duties; that they are to make part of our lives, and influence our characters. In the acquisition of all science we can find our way in its rudiments, only by exemplifications of its rules. Something like this is true in Religion and Morals. Their general details are, from their very nature, dry and uninteresting to the young and uninstructed. But individualize them—represent them as influencing and form-

ing particular characters—as directing their lives so as to be happy and prosperous here, and filled with hope for hereafter, and we touch the cords of human sympathy; we find an entrance to the human heart which would be barred against every other attempt. When we reflect how admirably and how successfully Miss Edgeworth has inculcated in this way her principles of education and morality, may we not hope that much might be done also for religion? And when too we recollect with what commanding power the bitter lessons of adversity are brought home to our hearts by Miss Brunton in her novel of Discipline, a field seems open to our hopes, in which the labourers might be many, and the harvest great.

But to confine our views more particularly to certain classes of society, the dissemination among them of such tracts, as those the names of which stand at the head of this article, may be made an important subsidiary instrument in producing that kind of religious influence which is of the most benefit in the conduct of life. The labourer may go home from public worship after an admirable discourse on the virtue of contentment, no better satisfied with his condition than when he went. He has heard fine maxims and fine reasoning, which no doubt have had their due effect upon the refined and intelligent part of the audience, still he does not feel their particular applicability to his own case. But let him read the story of Henry Goodwin, the Contented Man; he finds something which he can realize, which comes home to his own bosom. He will rise from its perusal better satisfied with his own condition, and grateful to God that, in spite of all his labours and privations, he has still so much to be thankful for.

Now this is the point at which we would arrive. Something is wanted to do that, which public instruction cannot alone do; to carry the influence of religion into the conduct and life of those, whose impressions from public instructions are vague and indistinct. Something to keep up in their minds the conviction, that they themselves are responsible beings; that every action and every motive,—not merely those which bear a particular relation to religion—are included in the account we are to render. To effect these purposes, the distribution of tracts, among other measures, would seem to promise success. One, who had imperceptibly imbibed the prejudice, that religion is not a thing for every day, but entirely distinct from the affairs of life, might have that prejudice imperceptibly weakened, or entirely removed, by the contemplation of a lively picture of a man similar to himself in occupation, in habits, in temper, who was made contented, patient, humble and forbearing by the influence of religion on his daily duties.

The Tracts, whose publication has been commenced with those at present under consideration, seem to us peculiarly well calculated to effect the purposes, for which this kind of writing is intended, and to be superior in every respect to those which have been usually circulated in our country. Their excellence and their superiority consist in the views of religion they exhibit, as it relates to the conduct of life—their views of the nature and extent of our moral duties as religious beings, in our various relations, and likewise in a truth and probability of representation, which brings home to every individual the feelings, the principles and the motives they delineate. Most of them are in the form of narrative; are respectable in point of literary execution, and capable of exciting an interest in the reader sufficiently strong to impress upon his mind the valuable instruction, which is mingled in, almost imperceptibly, with the characters and incidents which form the basis of the composition. There is a peculiar advantage in this informal method of teaching men their duty, especially those in the lower classes of society. The principles we imbibe are more firmly fixed in the mind, than when conveyed by direct precept. They are more like the results of personal experience, for they are connected in the mind with the same sort of associations, as those which gave their permanency and value to those results.

There is another view, in which the Tracts before us appear highly important. They are free from all false and extravagant statements of the nature and requirements of christianity. The ideas, which they tend to form upon this subject, are of the most wholesome and practical kind. They represent religion—as it is—intended for the present life, as well as for a future. They teach us to connect our religious principles and feelings with those of morality—to found our hopes of the favour of God upon the performance of our duties towards his creatures, our fellow men. The necessary connexion of religion and morality in order to the perfection of either, is constantly kept in view and strongly enforced. They are represented as inseparable companions in the human breast, as accomplishing hand in hand the great work of reformation and amendment in the heart of man; one, the actuating principle—the other, its practical fruit. We find also ample exemplifications of the mode, in which our good principles are to be made our guides and guards in the every-day concerns of life. They have a direct tendency to remove that pernicious prejudice, to which we have before alluded, that religion is only a thing for times and seasons, is to be present in our hearts during the exercises of the Sabbath, but may be laid upon the shelf with our Bible, when that day is past.

The influence of religion upon life and happiness is impressively exhibited. Not as exciting us to gloomy reflexions, to melancholy views of every thing around us; not as if it were to be exhausted in solitude and in silence, or in unmeaning sentiments, heaped crudely together in the mind, but as affording a motive to go through life, unrepining, and making the best of it in spite of its temptations and privations, teaching us to submit cheerfully to personal self-denial, to practice personal forbearance, when virtue requires the sacrifice to be made. We are presented with pictures, true to nature, of individuals, supported only by religion, contentedly submitting to reproach, poverty, and suffering; denying themselves not merely the unnecessary comforts of life, but many of its most rational enjoyments, merely from a sense of duty, founded on a regard to the existence and government of God.

In short, these tracts seem peculiarly calculated for the purposes to which they are devoted; to make men moral, religious, and happy here, and more perfectly so in another life. We know of few works, intended for the perusal of the uninstructed, which are so unexceptionable in a religious point of view. We are happy, that they are re-publishing among us; and trust, they will be widely and freely circulated. It is the duty of every one, who has the cause of Christianity at heart, to do something in such a way, as he is able, to promote its practical effect upon mankind. Many of us might contribute our mite in disseminating instruction among our poorer brethren by the distribution of Tracts, who would otherwise be unprofitable servants in this great work. The seed may be scattered by the way-side; it may fall among rocks; it may be choked by thorns; but some of it will fall upon good ground, will spring up and flourish, and blossom, and yield to us, as well as to others, the blessed fruits of virtue.

INTELLIGENCE.

Conversion of the Jews.—A few months since we copied from a British publication some statements on this subject, which were unsatisfactory to the friends of the Jews' Society. The following short history of the operations of that Society, prepared for us by a distinguished individual, who has taken a principal interest in the subject here, we insert with pleasure, as we are desirous of avoiding all partial representations, and have no object but to make known the simple and exact truth.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews was formed in 1809. The Institution consisted of Episcopalians and Dissenters of various denominations. For some time their efforts to ameliorate the temporal and spiritual situation of the Jews seemed to have the desired effect. The Society, which was small in its commencement, increased in numbers and respectability. A chapel for the converted Jews was in 1813 erected at Bethnal Green, and in the course of one year, attended, by one hundred Jews; in the building of which, the Dissenters cordially united with the Established church. The following year their prospects were clouded; the pecuniary affairs of the Society became embarrassed, and other inconveniences were foreseen. It was therefore agreed, in the year 1815, that their affairs should be entrusted to a committee of the established church. The Dissenters still, however, continued their contributions. Mr. Lewis Way, who is eminently rich, as well as pious and charitable, cleared the debts of the institution. But his disinterested benevolence was abused by a pretended convert named Josephson, who was found guilty of stealing from him various articles of silver, and robbing his church of the communion plate and surplices, and likewise detected in a forgery on his banker to the amount of six hundred pounds. He is since banished to Botany Bay.

Several other pretended converts were detected in immoral practices and dismissed from the Society. Much odium was cast on the Institution by their conduct. Yet may not candour require some allowances to be made for a new society, in which the managers were at first too sanguine and wanted experience to direct them? Ought we not to consider that the society ever inculcated the purest principles of morality? One of the members of the Institution observes, "It was never in contemplation with a single individual in this society, merely to proselyte to a system of religious opinions. I am persuaded I speak the sentiments of the whole committee, when I say, that not one of them would go over the threshold of his door to make a Jewish convert, unless he could thereby make him a better member of society, and lead him in the way of everlasting life."* One of the authors of the Jewish Expositor observes, "Where had been the present most venerated church of England, if St. Paul had desisted from his labours amongst the Gentiles, because Demas departed from the faith, having loved this present world?"

The London Society considered those painful events as a trial of their faith and patience; and for a time† left it to their conduct

* Jewish Repository, May 1813.

† The Rev. Mr. Way has, however, lately published an answer to the British Critic, which does not appear to have reached this country.

and future events to answer the objections of their enemies. Instead of giving up the object of their Institution, they were solicitous to improve the lesson of prudence and circumspection, which adversity had taught them. This solicitude gave rise to new and judicious regulations. The plan of giving temporal relief to the Jews has been altogether abandoned, from long experience of its evil effects. It has also been determined, that Jewish converts, when appointed as missionaries, shall be accompanied by Christians of tried and established fidelity to the cause. Miss Hannah More, in a letter, dated June 1818, observes, that since the London Society has purified itself of its corrupt members, I trust with God's blessing it will make renewed progress." This appears to be the case, particularly abroad, and it ought ever to be remembered, in estimating what the London Society has done, that its proceedings have not been confined to Great Britain, but extend to all parts of the world, where there are Jews. The two large editions of the Hebrew New Testament which they have published, have had an extensive circulation in Europe, and a considerable number been sent to Asia and America. This measure has been approved by all denominations of Christians; the Society of Friends, in particular, have been zealous in promoting this object. A respectable member of this Society observes, that "the proceedings of the London Institution in translating and circulating the Hebrew New Testament appears to me wholly and unexceptionably pure."*

The London Society have appointed the Rev. Mr. Solomon, as a missionary to the Jews of Russian Poland. This gentleman accompanied Mr. Way in a journey undertaken by him at his private expense, for the purpose of ascertaining, by personal observation, the religious state and disposition of the Jews inhabiting the northern provinces of Europe. The favourable disposition of the Jews in Poland towards Christianity, is related by Mr. Way, and also by Dr. Pinkerton, who has recently made a second tour through that country, and has communicated the following remarks on the religious state of its Jewish inhabitants. "During my late tour through Poland, I no where found the Jews unwilling to converse with me on the subject of Christianity. I distributed about seventy copies of the Hebrew Testament among them, which were always well received. I repeatedly entered their synagogues and schools, and with the utmost possible freedom argued the points at issue between them and us; and I never found the smallest interruption, but, on the contrary, a great desire in many people to hear and to read. Nor is there scarcely a town in Poland, where frequent instances of Jews entering Christian communions are not to be met with.

* Letter from Rev. Mr. Hawtrey, November 1819.

The London Society conduct their operations in Poland under the auspices of the Emperor Alexander, who, in 1818, published three Ukases in favour of the Jews. The number of the Jews in Russia is reckoned to exceed two millions. The London Society, therefore, to use the words of the Rev. Mr. Hawtrey, their Secretary, "considered the Emperor as their warm and decided friend, and most powerful human coadjutor."

The London Society are now about to print a Jewish German New Testament; but it would swell this article to too great a length to mention their numerous exertions in various parts of the globe. To conclude with a remark of the Right Hon. Lord Erskine, when addressing the Society, "I wish with all sobriety to consider this subject; but I own to you, it is my opinion still, (supposing it not to happen to any of the generations of men for ages to come, to see the deliverance and restoration of the Jews,) that this Society stands its ground upon the grand principle of Christian benevolence, in spreading the advantages of the Christian system to all people of all descriptions; and as we have been told, 'they, that are sick have need of a physician, and not they that are whole,' the Jews of all other persons in the world, are best entitled to stand first in being restored to that situation, which has been foretold from the beginning to close the grand scene of prophecy, even the binding up of the whole human race, in one fold, under one Shepherd."

Evangelical Missionary Society.—This interesting Society still continues to labour in its appropriate field of christian benevolence, and, in proportion to the extent of its funds, its success has not been inconsiderable. Founded as it is, on truly Catholic, evangelical principles, it is eminently entitled to the patronage and support of those, who wish to diffuse the blessings of christianity without the alloy of bigotry and sectarianism. In the selection of its missionaries, it has had reference rather to the temper and life, than to the peculiar mode of faith; and, in consequence, has exhibited the delightful spectacle, (and, with one exception* perhaps, no other society has done it) of fellow labourers of different views, deriving their support from a common source.

There is another circumstance, which gives this Society a preeminence over most others, whose objects are similar. It does not send its missionary over an extensive tract of country, to scatter abroad a few seeds to be "scorched by the sun," or "gathered by the fowls of heaven," but stations him in one place, to

* We refer to the "Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America."

till the ground he has broken up, and to water and nurture the seeds he has sown. Hence, whilst probably few, if any, would have derived permanent advantage from a transient visit, by the *persevering* labours of the missionary, a church has been formed, and a religious society collected, or a broken, disjointed church has been reunited, and the divided, wandering members of a parish gathered, and thus enabled without further assistance from abroad, to support their own minister.

Another feature in the character of this society is worthy of notice. Its missionaries are instructers of children and youth, as well as preachers of the gospel, and their exertions in this way have been highly beneficial. Young persons, of both sexes, have been qualified for the office of instruction, have gone out into other places, and have diffused abroad the knowledge they had themselves received.

In addition to the employment of missionaries, the Society distributes religious tracts, and will receive and faithfully appropriate, any monies that may be entrusted to it, for the support of foreign missionaries, or translating the scriptures into foreign languages.

The claims on this Society are numerous, and continually increasing. Its funds are by no means adequate to meet them. It remains with the christian public to decide, whether a denial shall any longer be given to them, who, in the most pressing manner are calling, as in the language of the Macedonian to Paul, *Come over and help us.*

We earnestly recommend this object to the attention of the pious and liberal, and we know not that we can present them with a more worthy object of their patronage. Those are justly commended, who labour to alleviate the bodily sufferings, and to promote the temporal comfort of their fellow creatures. How much nobler the attempt, to raise them from a state of spiritual darkness and degradation, to impart to them the blessed light, the cheering consolations, the sustaining, animating hopes of heavenly truth, to feed them with the bread that came down from heaven.

Christians, *freely you have received*, you should *freely give.* Remember that you are stewards. Remember how much you owe for the inestimable gift of the gospel, and that great is the reward of those who are instrumental *in turning many to righteousness.*

Church at Eastport.—We are happy in receiving very favourable accounts of the state and prospects of the Congregational Society at Eastport, Washington county, state of Maine. This society is composed at present of between fifty and sixty families,

and is receiving new accessions. They have at a considerable expence erected a very commodious and handsome church, which has recently been dedicated. Mr. Andrew Bigelow, of Cambridge University, being then engaged in preaching with them, officiated at their desire on the occasion, and delivered an appropriate and serious discourse from Luke xvii. 20. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." We are happy to learn, that he has complied with their request to continue his labours among them for a limited period.

The unanimity and liberality, which have marked the proceedings of this society are entitled to much praise, and may be regarded as an earnest of their future prosperity. We consider this settlement in a religious view as highly interesting. Eastport has already a population of 2300, and is advancing in commercial importance. It is, therefore, probably destined to exert a considerable influence on the religious character of the county, throughout which, as we have understood, there is now but one regular clergyman. We hope the same spirit of harmony and zeal, which has seemed to actuate them, may continue and increase. They have a just claim upon our co-operation and prayers.

We are also much gratified in the favourable situation of the Congregational Society at Belfast, Maine. This Society, it may be remembered, was for a long time in a broken and unhappy state, and unable to provide for themselves even for a short period, the benefits of the ministry. Since the settlement, however, among them, of the Rev. Mr. Frothingham, who was sent to their aid upon their application to the Evangelical Missionary Society, and who afterwards became the pastor of their united choice, their divisions have been healed, their numbers have multiplied, and there is an increasing seriousness and attention to the ordinances of religion. In the flourishing condition of this Society, now no longer in need of any assistance, we have a convincing proof of the wisdom of the plan, that has been adopted with regard to our missionaries, and a most animating encouragement to new and extended efforts.

Public Education.—Considerable attention has of late been excited to the important subject of our Public Schools, and particularly to the support and patronage required for the Latin Grammar School in Boston. The liberal system, which has been adopted for the last few years, has been greatly satisfactory to the friends of learning, and has raised this school to a very high reputation. Believing that the interests of learning are intimately connected with the still nobler interests of morals and religion,

we quote with satisfaction the following passage from the charge of the Hon. Chief Justice Parker, recently delivered to the Grand Jury at the opening of the Supreme Judicial Court in this county, and at their request communicated to the public. We quote from the Daily Advertiser of April 27, in which this admirable charge may be found.

"The reputation which a country may acquire by its wealth or its military strength, does not satisfy those who feel interested in its true glory: it is the cultivation of a literary taste, a respect for learning and learned men, works of literature and science, (together with the public and private virtues which these are calculated to produce,) that our country must be indebted for her reputation abroad, and for that place in history, which all her sons must wish her to sustain.

"*It is not true* that nothing is acquired but the dead languages in studying them.—The history of ancient times, of the glorious struggles of noble states and men to procure or regain their liberty—the magnanimous devotion of citizens to the welfare of their country—the most profound lessons of moral philosophy—the most delightful flights of poetic fancy, these are all communicated to the minds of the young, in a form calculated to make the most durable impression, and to lay the foundation of that high character, which forms the true glory of a people.

"It is for these reasons, with others equally important, which will suggest themselves to every intelligent mind, that I cannot but hope, that a seminary so eminent in past time, and which, under its present wise and skilful management, is advancing in usefulness and celebrity, will continue to receive the enlightened patronage of the inhabitants of this town, whose child it is; so that in the rapid progress of our country to national greatness, history may point to this as the best nursery of learning and virtue, the place where heroes, statesmen, and public benefactors of every kind, have in successive generations imbibed those principles, and laid the foundation of that knowledge, which has enabled them to adorn the age in which they lived, and to promote the happiness of their cotemporaries and posterity."

Tracts.—We solicit the attention of the Christian Public to the Tracts, which we are printing, and many of which may be procured in any number at the store of Messrs. Wells & Lilly. The agents and patrons of the Christian Disciple are requested to apply for them, and assist in their circulation: and the friends of religion will confer a favour by lending pecuniary aid to the promotion of so good an object.

The following is a list of the Tracts with their several prices;

1. Sermon at the ordination of Rev. Jared Sparks, delivered at Baltimore, 1819. By Rev. William E. Channing. Price 12½ cents single.—$1 20 per dozen.—$8 per 100.

2. Henry Goodwin, or the Contented Man. Price 17 cents single.—$1 80 per dozen.—$11 per 100.

3. Essay on the Use and Meaning of the phrase "Holy Spirit." Price 8 cents single.—75 cents per dozen.—$4 per 100.

4. Essay on Conversion. Price do. do. do.

In connexion with these, we notice that WELLS & LILLY are reprinting the series of Tracts, originally published by the English Christian Tract Society. These tracts have been extensively circulated, and been highly approved. For a particular account of their practical design and character, we refer our readers with pleasure to the review on the subject, contained in the present number.

The following are already printed, and may be had at the annexed prices, sewed:

No. 1. William's Return, or Good News for Cottagers: by Mary Hughes. Price single, 17 cents, per dozen $1 62, per hundred $10.

No. 2. Village Dialogues. Parts 1 and 2. 12½ cents single.—$1 12½ per dozen.—$8 per 100.

No. 3. Village Dialogues. Part 3. 12½ cents do. do. do.

No. 4. Village Dialogues. Part 4. 12½ cents do. do. do.

No. 5. Village Dialogues. Part 5. 12½ cents do. do. do.

No. 6. Village Dialogues. Part 6. 12½ cents do. do. do.

No. 7. A Week in a Cottage. 12½ cents do. do. do.

No. 8. The History of Edward Allen, the patient man. Price 17 cents single.—$1 62 per dozen.—$10 per 100.

☞ Applications from vacant parishes for candidates educated at the Theological School at Cambridge, may be made to the Rev. Professor WARE, or to S. HIGGINSON, Jr. Esq.

List of New Publications.

Character Essential to Success in Life. By Isaac Taylor, Ongar. Wells and Lilly, 1820.

Family Mansion. By Mrs. Taylor, 1820.

Sermon delivered in Eastport on the Dedication of the First Congregational Meeting House, Jan. 13, 1820. By Andrew Bigelow, A.M.

Sermon delivered at the Ordination of E. J. Sewall, by Ezra Ripley, D.D.

Letters on the Eastern States. New York, 1820.

Poetical Works of John Trumbull, L.L.D. 8vo. 1820.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Our friends will perceive by the aspect of our Miscellany, that their claims are not neglected.

We fear, that W.'s poetry would be thought not sufficiently simple and intelligible.

Eusebia was mislaid, or should have appeared. We will find a place for it hereafter.

We thank MIKPOΣ for his communication. We perceive that there is much, that is interesting in the discussion he has commenced, but fear it is too extended for the limits of the Disciple. If he will furnish us with a condensed view of all he proposes, we shall be better able to judge as to the expediency of inserting it. At present, we are disposed to think, that some other medium of publication would be preferable.

"A Layman" is just received.

END OF NO. 2.—VOL. II.

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

NEW SERIES—No. 9.

For May and June, 1820.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF GREAT NAMES.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

It is thought by some, that our opinions on important subjects should in no case be influenced by the authority of distinguished names; for on what question, they ask, may not the greatest geniuses be found in opposition to each other? If it be urged, as an argument in favour of Christianity, that certain eminent men have been believers; it will be objected on the other hand, that men not less eminent have been infidels. Since, therefore, as we are told, these opposite authorities mutually destroy each other, this mode of defending Christianity cannot be admitted. Let not those persons, then, who thus argue, avail themselves of the authority of great names to promote infidelity.

But however plausible such reasoning appears, it may be worth while to inquire, whether it is in *this case* solid; and whether the fact, that the christian religion has been pronounced true, by persons of the highest endowments and attainments, does not furnish an argument for its truth.

The accounts contained in the sacred writings, or those, on which their divine origin rests, are in their *nature* difficult to be believed. They are such as the mind at first and previously to examination, is apt to reject as fabulous. It shocks us to be told of events happening in opposition to those laws which regulate and sustain the universe; we do not, we cannot fully admit the truth of them, until we have evidence which appears to us irresistible. When, therefore, we recollect by whom, by what illustrious geniuses and scholars, the christian faith has been embraced, in what manner shall we account for this phenomenon? Are we to suppose that a Locke, a Grotius, a Newton, those

great masters of reasoning, those distinguished lovers and propagators of truth, yielded a *blind* belief to stories which, from their very nature, are liable to be regarded as the fabrications of impostors? Can we imagine, that *they* credited accounts of miracles, of prodigies and wonders, without proof? This were a miracle indeed! No! *such* men believe *such* accounts only because they are constrained to believe them; because they see, that, if the facts related are extraordinary, the testimony which supports them, is likewise extraordinary; and that, if they reject Christianity, they must no longer submit to the government of reason.

Let us now take a view of the other side, and consider how Christianity is affected by the *infidelity* of great men. Have they, let me ask, made a careful, impartial inquiry into the evidences of our religion? If we suppose they have *not* made this inquiry (a supposition which, as it respects many leading deists, is certainly correct) we want no further reason for their infidelity. It, indeed, follows as a natural consequence. Strong evidence alone will produce a conviction of the truth of marvellous events; and strong evidence concerning those recorded in the scriptures is to be obtained only by patient examination.

But it may be asked on the other hand, is it conceivable that great writers would have employed their pens against the christian revelation, without having investigated its pretensions to authenticity? This, it must be confessed, appears at first view almost incredible. But when we consider the nature of the facts contained in the Bible; the aspect, under which they at first present themselves to the understanding; the reluctance we feel in yielding our assent to things so wonderful and so different from any within our own observation; the study requisite to collect the proofs of their authenticity; and the several ways, by which the mind is liable to be misled, such as, by strong prejudice, peculiarly active in countries where the established religion is an enormous mass of abuses—by an accidental habit of looking at Christianity through the medium of those objections and difficulties, which are, perhaps, inseparable from every system of revelation—by a sordid wish that a religion, so pure, so holy, so opposed to an unbridled license of the passions, may not be true—by a silly contempt of vulgar notions, and a perverse ambition, which some men display, and which seems, like a demon, to possess their minds, of astonishing the world by the originality of their ideas, at the expense of truth, religion, virtue, and common sense;—when, in short, we consider, how much there is, or may be, within and without us, to oppose inquiry upon this subject, we can readily conceive, that even the most distinguished one-

mies of Christianity may have been prevented from acquiring that perception of the evidences of our holy faith, which could alone be expected to produce conviction.

There is another point of view, under which this subject may be considered, perhaps to some advantage. One of the principal weapons, employed by infidels in their attacks upon Christianity, is *ridicule;* and no one has, probably, done more execution. When we find men, whose talents command our admiration, laughing in the face of the world at a religion, for which even the most distant probability of its divine origin ought to inspire reverence, our faith almost staggers; we ask, whether Christianity assailed by such men and in such a way, can possibly be true? Whether minds, which appear to have been sent from heaven to enlighten mankind, can have been thus blind or thus presumptuous? Whether those Titans of genius could have dared to assault the skies? Whether indeed they could have treated, with so much irreverence, the slightest appearance, the very spectres and shadows of divine truth?

But, if we view this mode of attacking Christianity in its just light, we shall be very differently affected by it; we shall consider it as a complete annihilation, in religious matters, of the authority of the writers by whom it is used. It is impossible that a religion, to the truth of which so many great and enlightened minds have given a decided verdict, can be founded on arguments, which, in the opinion of any persons who attend to them, are so feeble, that they should not even shield it from contempt and ridicule. He, therefore, who scoffs and sneers at Christianity, gives a convincing proof, that he never can have made it a serious study; but that he has suffered himself to be borne along by those sportive, contemptuous emotions, which, in a mind void of consideration, are apt to be excited by accounts of supernatural transactions. A view of the real strength of our religion must, otherwise, have taught him more respect for it; its claims to attentive consideration, and its strong marks of truth would have been acknowledged, even though infidelity had continued unsubdued.

On the whole, the belief of great geniuses and scholars of the divine origin of a religion which they have studied, shows, that it must be supported by strong arguments. The disbelief even of equal geniuses cannot prove the contrary; the utmost, it can prove, is, that arguments, which convinced others, did not convince them. And when we consider the various causes of infidelity which exist, and which operate with the greatest force on the loftiest intellects, we shall not be the less disposed to yield our assent to the truth of Christianity, because some men of brilliant

parts have refused theirs, and have not distinguished this religion from the multitude of fabrications, which fraud, enthusiasm and force have imposed upon mankind.

Whatever weight, then, the authority of great names has in this matter, it is altogether on the side of our religion; and to learn how considerable it is, we have only to call to mind a few of the illustrious men that have declared themselves Christians, to be fully satisfied. Though not sufficient to supercede inquiry into the proper evidences of Christianity, it is yet sufficient to procure for it respect and reverence prior to such inquiry; and to produce, at least a suspension of our *disbelief*, till we have seen it overthrown by substantial and irrefragable arguments.

A Layman.

A SHORT ANSWER TO THE INQUIRY, 'WHY ARE YOU A COMMUNICANT?'

Of the peculiarities of christian worship, the ordinance of the Lord's supper would, I think, most powerfully arrest the notice, and excite the curiosity, of a stranger to our religion. It is formally announced on the sabbath preceding that of its administration; and in most of our churches there is an extraordinary service, for the purpose of disposing those who are to receive it, to a more suitable observance of this rite of the gospel. The day arrives. The elements appointed by Christ are prepared, and believers assemble in the churches. The stranger waits to see the service performed. But no sooner is the christian benediction pronounced, than his astonishment is awakened by the departure of more than half of these worshippers, every one of whom, he supposed, was a disciple of Jesus. The doors are now closed. And what a spectacle is presented before him! Here are parents without their children, and children without their parents; wives without their husbands, and husbands without their wives. The nearest and most endeared relations are separated by this service, the author of which, he had been informed, was the *Son of God;* by whom each of his disciples believes that he shall be judged, and through whom each one hopes for redemption, and for life eternal in heaven. Could this be the design of the founder of christianity? Or are the conditions of admission to his church so rigorous, that a small number only can submit to them? Or is the ordinance indeed obligatory on all? Or was it intended only for one class of christians? These inquiries would naturally arise in the mind of the stranger; and he avails himself of an opportu-

nity of demanding of one who has observed the rite, 'Why are you a communicant?' What is his reply?

'I am a communicant, for the same reason that I receive the gospel as a divine revelation; that is, from a conviction of *the authority of Christ to teach the will of God, and to disclose the conditions of pardon and of final happiness.* Having this conviction, I am bound to obey all which the gospel inculcates; and language cannot make a duty more plain than is the command, *do this in remembrance of me.*'—This is indeed very simple reasoning; but has it not all the force which truth can give to it?

The authority of Christ, in all the commands of the gospel, is the authority of *the Father who sent him.* This will not be denied by any one who receives the New Testament as a divine revelation. If you should ask me, why I am a christian, or a believer in christianity? I should appeal to evidences, external and internal, to prove the divine mission of our Lord. But if you ask me, why I am a communicant? I allege as my first reason, the conviction these evidences have produced in my mind, that he is the Son of God; authorized and empowered to teach the way of salvation; and consequently, that all he requires has the sanction of divine commands. This argument, to be sure, to have any force, presupposes an acknowledgment of Jesus as a Teacher sent by God. But on him who avows his faith in the gospel, does it not impose a perfect obligation to keep this feast, which our Lord has instituted?

This is a very important view of the subject. If he whom we call our Lord was not invested with the authority of God, why do we appeal to any of his laws? If he had this authority, how can we feel ourselves to be safe, while we thoughtlessly and habitually disregard any one of his commands? Do you say, this is but *a positive rite;* and cannot therefore, in its neglect, expose us to the consequences of violating *a moral precept?* But if it be commanded by God, or, which is the same thing, by one sent from God, it is as obligatory, as the moral precepts of the gospel. If the will of God be the basis of religious and moral obligation,—and it is equally so, whether the law be written on our hearts, be suggested by our conditions and relations, or promulgated by a divine messenger,—then are we equally accountable for the neglect, or the abuse of this institution, as we are of any divine command. The authority of God, in all cases, must be equal; and to a believer in the gospel, the command, *do this in remembrance of me*, is a command of God. To us, indeed, the difference may be great, whether a man neglect this service, or the laws of justice and benevolence; for in one case, he injures us

essentially; and in the other, neither counteracts our interests, nor interrupts our pleasures. But God has no interests to be opposed, and no pleasures to be disturbed by man. He requires duties, not for his own sake, but for ours; and he would not give his authority to a command, of which it was indifferent whether we should obey, or disregard it. Even therefore if we could not discern any immediate advantages resulting from the service, a disregard of it could not be justified, while we are convinced of its divine appointment; for as soon as this conviction is produced, the service becomes to us essentially *a religious duty*, of which, equally as of other and universally acknowledged duties, we are to give account to God.

I would not press an observance of this ordinance of our religion *exclusively* on the ground, that its obligation is supported by the authority of God; for God has not, in fact, required any thing of us, to which he has not attached benefits so important, as to establish the closest relation between our duties, and our highest interests. But the ground of that confidence, with which we look for the blessings which are in any instance assured to our piety and virtue, is, *the authority of him who has assured them;* and proportionally feeble will be our trust in the authority which dispenses promises, as is our sensibility and reverence of that which demands obedience to laws. A recurrence to the original source of obligation, *the will of God*,—or, which is the same thing as to every command of the gospel, *the will of Christ*,—is therefore not only proper, but frequently necessary, to produce conviction where it is not, and to strengthen it where it already exists. Hence a communicant may, and ought to adduce it as his first answer to the inquiry, 'Why do you observe this service?' that Christ, his Lawgiver, to whom he applies for a knowledge of the will of God, has commanded it. And I appeal to any dispassionate judgment, whether I could innocently neglect, or refuse to partake of this ordinance, while I am convinced that the commands of Jesus have all the obligation of the will of God. I appeal to conscience, if our Lord has indeed given this command to all his disciples, whether his authority does not demand its observance of all, by every consideration that gives dignity to his character, and solemnity to his commands?

It is Jesus, *the Son of God;* it is Jesus, whom you call your *Saviour;* whose laws you acknowledge to be the will of the Most High, and by whom we shall finally be judged, who says to you, *Take, eat, this is my body;* and, *Drink ye all of this cup.* If a stranger to our religion should ask you, whether you are a believer in the gospel of Christ, you would assert your faith with-

out hesitation. But should he also inquire, 'Why then do you not commemorate the love he has expressed for you by his death,' what would be your reply?

We may distinguish the commands of the gospel into different classes, and call them, if we will, religious, moral, and positive. But if we attribute to each different degrees of obligation, and flatter ourselves that we are secure, because we observe those which are most essential, we pervert the word of God, and most dangerously deceive our own hearts. The institution of a law, or of an ordinance, by an authorized Messenger from God, is a perfect evidence of its *importance*, as well as of its obligation; and we derogate from the character of God by the supposition, that any of his appointments may be disregarded with impunity. I do not say, nor would I intimate, that the observance of this ordinance will alone secure for us the favour of God. It will conduce to our salvation no otherwise, than as it is a means of our christian piety and virtue. But it is a part of the will of God concerning us, no part of which is unimportant; and which must be received with desires and endeavours for entire obedience, to secure the blessings it proposes.

SELF-COMMUNION.

One of the causes why self-communion is so much neglected is, that we have neither an appointed place, nor time for it. But would publick worship be maintained, if there were no sabbaths? Is any one accustomed to private, or to family prayer, who has no stated seasons for this intercourse with God? Does any one faithfully read the scriptures, who has no allotted hours for this exercise? It is with the means of religion, as with many of the more common duties of life; many, very many acknowledge their importance, and intend to observe them. But a future time, it is thought, will be more convenient, or more favourable, than the present; and the duty is delayed,—perhaps never to be performed. Would you then commence and practise self-examination? Let me recommend the time and place prescribed in the fourth Psalm: "Commune with your own heart *upon your bed*, and be still."

This is not indeed the only time, nor is it the only place, for communion with our own hearts. But surely, in the darkness of night, and when we have lain down, it may be, to rise no more in this world; when our account for another day is about to be sealed,—for eternity; it is a time peculiarly suited for solemn

consideration; for proposing and answering the inquiries, 'how have I been engaged? What have I done? What duty have I neglected? What law have I broken? What account, if I were called this night, should I have to render to God?' And when we awake, refreshed from the fatigue of toil; when we feel the new vigour that has been imparted by a night of rest; when hope has been so far accomplished, and we are again permitted to see the sun, and are again called to exercise the faculties God has given for our improvement; to resume our labours, and to partake of the blessings of heaven; when we are again about to enter upon scenes of duty, and of discipline; upon trials, the consequences of which will be so important to us, both in this life and that which is to come;—it is surely reasonable, it is wise, it is a duty, to pause; to consider what we are about to do; what God requires of us; and, what is the preparation of our hearts for his service. Let me refer to some of the benefits that will result from this practice.

I. In communion with our hearts upon our beds, we may at night retrace and examine with no inconsiderable *exactness*, the courses of our thoughts through the day; the subjects, expressions, and feelings of our conversation; the objects we have pursued; the motives by which we have been actuated; the passions we have indulged; all our well intended efforts; all our omissions of duty, and our more direct transgressions of the will of God. And in the morning, we may at least anticipate the common cares and duties of the day before us; and inquire, what are the principles and dispositions with which we are prepared to meet them? We may anticipate *probable* circumstances and events; temptations, to which we may be exposed, and sufferings we may be called to sustain; and at least for the few waking hours of one short day, resolve in each to remember and to feel, that we are accountable to God. But the thoughts, the motives and feelings, the words and actions of a month, or of a week, are not so easily to be recalled, nor so distinctly to be perceived. They become effaced from the memory; or if still there, are blended together; or, viewed at a distance from the present moment, like other distant objects, they will be seen as a whole, but not in the peculiarities which distinguish them. It is therefore a very great advantage of this frequent self-communion, that it enables us with such *exactness* to examine, and with such *accuracy* to understand, the character and tendencies of our thoughts and words, of our dispositions and conduct.

II. Another great advantage of this frequent self-communion will be, the *impartiality* with which we shall be enabled to judge ourselves, and the *fidelity* with which we may apply the principles, by which we shall at last be judged.

Our judgments are essentially affected by the circumstances, under which we decide concerning our dispositions and actions. If we attempt to judge them, while yet the passions and feelings that excited them are alive and active, these passions and feelings, by which we have been overcome, will plead so loudly and so earnestly in their own justification, that reason and religion will scarcely obtain an impartial hearing. Such an examination will tend as little to our improvement, as that distant and indistinct view of our dispositions and conduct, in which they can scarcely be perceived, and are but very imperfectly comprehended. Or, if we examine ourselves, merely that we may determine what opinions will probably be formed of our characters and actions, we shall easily excuse in ourselves what is wrong, if it have not been condemned by others; and especially, if it have the sanction of the example of those, whose favour we would obtain. Or, if in any instance we incur, or fear public censure, it is very doubtful whether we shall aim at any thing higher, than greater caution in future; it may be, than greater secrecy, that we may avoid the discovery of conduct, of which we have not resolution to reform. But when we lie down at night, to rest from the labours and indulgencies of the day; when the glare of the day has passed away; when appetite and passion, having received their customary indulgence, have sunk to repose; when, amidst the darkness that surrounds us, we feel the presence of God,—and feel too, that from the sleep into which we are about to fall, we may awake in another and untried state of existence; when our tempers, and appetites, and conversation, and conduct through the day, are yet so fresh in our remembrance, that every circumstance of them may be recalled, we may, if we will, be impartial; we may ascertain what have been our deviations from the straight and narrow way; what feeble and drooping sentiments of duty require our fostering care to raise and to strengthen them; what self-denials we have practiced, or are yet demanded of us; and in what condition, if suddenly called, we should appear before God? On our pillows, at night, we may call up and examine even our most secret and suddenly excited motives and feelings; our expressions, and the circumstances in which we used them; all our temptations from within and without. And if, to this examination of ourselves, we bring our principles and hopes as christians, how ineffectual, how evil will appear to have been all the excuses we have admitted of our sins! How ashamed shall we feel of carrying with us to the bar of Christ, the apologies by which we have soothed, or the promises with which we have deluded conscience! How important will appear to us true repentance,—reformation towards God—and a living, active

faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ! Or, when we awake, and passion and appetite are not yet clamorous; and the temptations to which we are peculiarly exposed may be anticipated, in all the circumstances in which they will endanger our virtue; and all our principles can be summoned, and stationed at the posts of danger; in the morning, while yet the mind and heart, calmed and refreshed by rest, are prepared for cool and deliberate action, how favourable is the hour for self-communion; for an *impartial* scrutiny into the tendency of our propensities and habits; for a *faithful* application of the principles, by which alone we may secure the approbation and favour of God! A faithful mind, a mind strongly fortified by the principles of true religion and virtue, may indeed be impartial towards itself, even in the very moment of temptation. But let us not rashly presume upon our strength. It is not but by long discipline, that the passions and appetites are brought to this subjection; and one of the most effectual means of this discipline will be, *daily to commune with our hearts upon our beds, and be still.*

III. In this daily self-communion, we shall have the great advantage of being able to resist whatever evil there is in us, *in its very beginning;* of cropping *the bud* of vicious desire; of tearing vice from our hearts, before it has struck deep its roots, and will demand a long exertion of our whole strength to eradicate it. It will be easy to deny ourselves a second indulgence of a passion, an appetite, or an action, when we are convinced that the first was evil. But the denial of a third, or fourth, or fifth indulgence, may require great resolution and effort; and a vicious habit is to be overcome, only by that long continued, that persevering resistance, during which new tastes and new desires are to be formed into habits. A child may snap asunder the single filaments, which, bound together, form the cable, that holds securely the largest vessel, against the violence alike of the waves and the tempest. And what are vicious habits, but the daily repetition of indulgencies, which, by uniting their strength, become too firm to be broken? Ask the man who is every day fretted by adverse occurrences, or who is habitually profane, or intemperate, why he indulges these propensities? In a calm moment he will acknowledge their guilt, and resolve to reform. But follow him for an hour, and you will see, that much more than a resolution is necessary to effect a change in his character. You will see that habits, like the trees, have grown insensibly, and like them, have acquired hardness and strength with time; that their roots are probably as large as their branches; and although a child might have broken off, and destroyed the tender plant, that it may demand very much more

than even the strength of a man, to rend a matured habit from the heart. How forcibly are we taught, by this tendency of our nature, the importance of an early and frequent attention to our appetites, feelings, words and actions! What a safeguard will it be to our virtue, and what a means of our present and everlasting peace, *daily to commune with our hearts upon our beds, and be still!*

We know others, only by intercourse with them; and it is only by intercourse with our own hearts, that we can know ourselves. But with how many is this the last of all resorts for society and happiness? It does not even occur to their thoughts to make friends of themselves; to seek society in self-communion; to learn human nature, by studying their own passions, propensities, motives and conduct. Let it not be so with us. Let us, in ourselves, follow the streams of desire, of feeling and of action, to their sources, and discover the hidden springs of our conduct, and learn what we are, and whither we are going. Soon will the term of our trial be closed. And how awful will be his condition, who awakes in judgment, ignorant of his own heart; ignorant of it, only because he has not examined it; and who has neglected self-examination, because he felt that he had not resolution to deny the passions, which had become accustomed to indulgence? Then *must* we see, and know ourselves. In the light of God's presence, the secrets of every heart will be disclosed. And how happy will he then be, who, in the knowledge he has possessed of himself, has arrested vicious propensities in their first encroachment; who has followed the guidance of conscience, enlightened by the word of God; and who has daily judged himself, in preparation for his great account! So let us examine and judge our hearts, and we shall not then be judged to condemnation.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE CONVERSATION OF JESUS WITH NICODEMUS.—John iii. 1—10.

The conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, recorded in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, is generally considered as an obscure and difficult part of the New Testament; and from the use which is made of it, it is important to ascertain its meaning. I shall attempt to give a popular and just explanation of it; an attempt which, if it has no other merit, will, I hope, afford an example of the manner in which the scriptures may be profitably read.

John iii. 1, 2. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

This is the first and almost the only time that Nicodemus is mentioned in the gospel history. Of his character we know little more than of his life; the facts related of him are not of a nature to assist us much in an inquiry on this subject. He was a Pharisee, a ruler, and one of the Jewish Senate. The Pharisees, as a sect, are often mentioned in the gospels. They were persons of great influence and consideration in the Jewish community. As the passages, which speak of them, are familiar, I only remark, that they affected a superior sanctity and austerity of manners, observed with rigorous exactness the ceremonials of the Mosaic law, made many and burdensome additions to its fasts, purifications, and tythes, and by their expositions of it and their traditions, they destroyed, or at least greatly injured, the moral influence of their religion; that they were extremely ostentatious in their devotion, filled with spiritual pride, and many of them chargeable with the most flagitious crimes. It should be particularly remarked in respect to them, that they condemned only the actual commission of sin, but did not deem it criminal to entertain evil desires, thoughts, and intentions.* Their views, in regard to the Messiah, corresponded with those of the nation at large. They expected in him a temporal prince, a military chieftain, who should deliver their nation from the Roman yoke, and restore the throne of David to its pristine glory and splendour.

It is probable that Nicodemus partook of the feelings, prejudices, and opinions, perhaps in some degree of the vices, of those with whom he was associated; and like others of his own sect, regarded religion as consisting rather in ritual observances, than in a devout and kind temper, a pure, benevolent, and useful life. His views respecting the Messiah were doubtless similar to those of his countrymen; and the secrecy, with which he visited Jesus, indicates a fear of forfeiting his rank and influence by associating with this despised Nazarene.

Such probably was Nicodemus. He came to Jesus by night and thus addresses him; We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles which thou

* Josephus, himself a Pharisee, laughs at Polybius for thinking the gods had punished Antiochus, for having formed only a *design* to pillage the temple of Diana, though he had not put it in execution. See Calmet Art. *Pharisee.*

doest, except God be with him. v. 2. Jesus says to him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. v. 3.

This language is highly figurative. To see the kingdom of God, in the view of Nicodemus, meant to witness the state of things, which should take place under the secular prince and deliverer, whose reign he, in common with his countrymen, anticipated; with Jesus it meant, to become his disciple and to subject one's-self to the moral and spiritual dominion of his religion. Jesus was well acquainted with the prejudices, views and expectations of the Jews, and knew that should he at once have instructed them in his true character, the particular objects of his mission, the nature of the authority with which he was clothed, and of the empire which he designed to establish, they would have immediately revolted from him. This accounts for the reserve which he often used, and the enigmatical manner in which he sometimes conveyed his instructions.

The change which Jesus here required of Nicodemus was a moral and intellectual change. This is generally acknowledged. The language is strong as the change, through which such a character as Nicodemus must pass in order to become a christian, was very considerable. It is easier, says Jesus to the rich young man, adopting an Arabian proverb familiar to the Jews, for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. These obstacles in the case of Nicodemus were great. The profession of christianity in that period was attended with peculiar difficulties and required peculiar sacrifices.

In order for Nicodemus to become a christian, his views concerning the nature of religion must be changed. Christianity explicitly taught the divine preference of mercy to sacrifice, and showed the indispensable necessity of subjecting the thoughts, desires, affections, words, nay the whole soul and conduct, to the dominion of religion; it taught that religious rites were only means of moral improvement, and had no value with God, separate from the disposition with which they were performed; and required that the love of God and of mankind should fill the hearts of its votaries, and constitute the supreme rule of life. But this was a new doctrine to Nicodemus; for although benevolence and piety were the end of the law and prophets as well as of christianity, yet, by the corruptions and additions of the scribes and pharisees, the original spirit of the Jewish religion was destroyed. The various rites, which Nicodemus punctiliously performed, and which he regarded with so much complacency, christianity taught him to view in a different light from

what he was accustomed. It inculcated that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed any thing; that his phylacteries were to be thrown aside; that ostentation in his religious services was offensive to God, and that he must retire from the street to the closet to perform his devotions; that the solemn and magnificent services of the Jewish temple were not indispensably necessary towards obtaining the favour of Jehovah; that the divine presence was not confined to the Holy of Holies; that God was a Spirit to be worshipped in spirit; that no part of nature was beyond the care of his paternal providence, no spot concealed from his notice, no prayer so silent but that it was heard in heaven; and that the truly devout, benevolent, and humble heart was the sanctuary where he would vouchsafe his audience, and where his responses should be given.

Next, christianity required a complete change in the opinions of Nicodemus respecting the Messiah. In opposition to the expectation of the Jews, Christ came not as a prince; not with pomp and splendour, but in poverty and humility; not to deliver the Jews from a political, but a moral bondage; not to conduct the nation to high destinies, but to foretel its destruction; not to conquer, but to submit; not to ascend a throne, but to expire on a cross. Well then might Jesus say, blessed is that man, particularly that Jew, more especially that Pharisee, who should not be offended in him. Christianity was further opposed to the prejudices of the Jews. It taught them that their nation were no longer the peculiar favourites, nor their temple the peculiar residence of the Deity, but that in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.*

For Nicodemus to become a christian, it was necessary not only that his religious and political opinions, deeply planted by education and fastened by age, should be changed, but he must subdue his timidity and ambition, he must sacrifice his rank and influence in society, he must expose himself to the reproaches of his own sect and to excommunication from the synagogue, and, a teacher in Israel, must yield himself to the instruction of a despised Galilean. Then again if he were a vicious man, and perhaps he could hardly have escaped altogether the general corruption, christianity demanded still more important changes of a moral nature, which, in men advanced in life, as it is likely from his office that he was, are extremely difficult. The conversion of such a character to the full knowledge and profession of christianity, might with propriety be compared to an introduction to a new existence.

* Acts x. 35.

But there is another remark to be made on the language, which is here used. The phrase 'being born again' was familiar to Nicodemus, as it was commonly applied to the proselytes from Gentilism to Judaism; they were baptized and circumcised, they left all their relations and connexions, and were said to be born again.* If it be asked why, if Nicodemus was accustomed to this language, he should so far mistake the meaning of Jesus as to suppose that he spoke of a natural birth, the answer is obvious; Nicodemus visited Jesus to ascertain whether he were the Messiah. For the 'kingdom of God,' or the state of things which he expected under the Messiah, he thought the Jews must be always prepared, as they were descendants of Abraham, to whom this kingdom was understood to be particularly promised; and he had not the most distant conception that for that purpose any change could be necessary, which could be compared with the change, which took place upon the introduction of a Gentile to the profession of Judaism, the conversion of a barbarian and idolater to the worship of the one only living and true God.

The history proceeds with Nicodemus' query to Jesus. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? v. 4. The reply of Jesus to this question next deserves our attention.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. v. 5, 6.

Jesus here proceeds to correct in a degree the gross mistake into which Nicodemus had fallen in regard to his former remark. He still uses language in a high degree figurative, and his reply is entitled to a critical examination.

To be born of water, as is generally agreed, intends to be baptized. The baptism of a person into any religion was merely the act of receiving him to instruction in the principles of that religion. Baptism, as has been observed, was an invariable ceremony on the introduction of a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and when Jesus informed Nicodemus that it would be necessary at the introduction of a Jew to his religion, he meant to apprize him, that his kingdom was different from the expectations, which had been formed of it; and was not a kingdom, to

* See Beausobre and L'Enfant's Intro. to N T. Watson's Tracts, Vol. III. 195. What is singular with regard to this phrase is, that the Hindoos speak of a second birth from acquiring a knowledge of the *Vedas*, which may be called their scriptures, and the phrase *twice born* is in a manner synonymous to a Bramin. Priestley's Notes on Scrip. Vol. III. p. 70.

which the Jews could claim admission merely on account of their descent from Abraham.

To be born of the spirit is a phrase of more difficult interpretation. This passage is generally cited as an irrefragable proof of the necessity of some immediate, perceptible, supernatural influences of the divine spirit on the mind, in the conversion of a sinner or an unbeliever to christianity. But there are objections to this interpretation, which compel us to seek one attended with fewer difficulties.

The truth of such an opinion requires, that miracles should be multiplied in the production of effects, which may spring from natural causes, and in all cases be accounted for on the general principles of human nature. Such an opinion is opposed to common experience, to what we know of the influence of custom and association, and to all the schemes of education, which we pursue with our children. We know that children are as susceptible of a moral as of a literary education; and that there are certain means to be employed for the formation, correction, and improvement of their tempers and moral habits, as much as for the enlargement of their minds and the correction of intellectual perversities. Such an opinion has a direct tendency to discourage, if it does not absolutely forbid, all exertions towards the amelioration of our characters; it seems totally inconsistent with many precepts of the gospel, and it represents Jesus and his apostles in their exhortations and commands to repentance, conversion, and improvement, to exertion and activity; demanding of men what they knew it was impossible for them to perform.

These are only a few of the objections which may be made to this opinion, under the form in which it is usually exhibited. At the same time we would not suggest, that we are not often benefited by the direct influences of the Deity on the minds and hearts of men; we doubt not that he is found in weakness to strengthen, in despondency to encourage, in trial to succour, in ignorance to instruct us; but we believe that these influences are conveyed to us through the circumstances of our situation, the events of our lives, the dispensations of his providence, the ordinary and extraordinary instructions with which we are favoured, and in an infinite variety of ways, consistent with human liberty, rather than by any supernatural, perceptible, and irresistible afflatus from heaven.

The inquiry returns, what are we to understand by the remark of Jesus, that except a man be born of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God?

The word *spirit* admits of many significations. An eminent critic* has enumerated not less than twenty-two different senses, in which it is used in the scriptures. It will answer our present purpose if I mention two of them.

It is often used for what is in other places called, The inward man, that is, the understanding, the will, and the affections; as when, for example, it is said, that *God is to be worshipped in spirit.* It is sometimes used for Christianity itself, for the doctrine of Christ especially, in opposition to Judaism. In this sense it is very often used by St. Paul. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death.† He entreats the brethren for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the spirit;‡ that is, without doubt, for the love of their religion. Now, says he, we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter; that is, that we should obey the doctrine of Christ, and not the law of Moses.§ In the epistle to the Corinthians he thus speaks: Our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious.‖ Many passages of this kind might be produced to show, that the word Spirit, is often employed to signify the christian religion itself; and that it is used in this way with the greatest propriety, it is not necessary to prove.

When our Saviour therefore told Nicodemus, that in order to enter his kingdom, he must be 'born of the spirit,' he probably intended either that he must be born spiritually, that is, mentally, his opinions, views, temper, moral feelings must be changed; or if we understand by spirit, the doctrine or religion of Christ, by being born of this doctrine, we are to understand, the reception of it into the heart and the subjection of the life to its control.

Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. v. 6.

It will be recollected at once, from what has been observed, whence this language is drawn; that it is similar to what was used upon the introduction of a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and it seems evident, that Jesus is here pursuing a comparison between that event and the conversion of a Jew and a Pharisee

* See Schleusner. Art. πνευμα.

† Rom. viii. 2. ‡ xv. 30. § vii. 6. ‖ 2 Cor. iii. 5—8.

to his religion. We may suppose him to have said, "You, Pharisees, receive Gentiles into the Jewish commonwealth by baptism and circumcision; with respect to such persons, for this purpose nothing more is necessary; by such ceremonies, which are altogether external, they become the adopted children of Abraham, and are entitled to all the privileges of the religion of Moses. Different is the process, by which you Jews are to be initiated into my kingdom. I receive you indeed to a baptism with water, because such a ceremony as this, which, from custom and education, in your view is always associated with a change of religion, is necessary to remind you, that the true kingdom of the Messiah is totally different from your expectations, and is a state of things for which you Jews are not qualified, as you naturally supposed you would be, merely by your descent from Abraham; but it is particularly necessary that you should be born of my doctrine, which is intellectual and moral, which is designed to fill your minds with truth and wisdom, and your hearts with benevolence and piety; a benevolence and piety of such an exalted stamp as you have little idea of; a benevolence, not such as you have learnt from the traditions of your fathers, which say, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy, but which will prompt you to show kindness to your most bitter enemies; a piety, not such as is satisfied with a mere attendance however strict, upon the services of the temple, but which will constitute a habit of your soul, and lead you in every situation to acknowledge and serve, to love and adore, that almighty, immortal, infinite, and holy Spirit, who is worthy of the purest homage of the purest mind. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" the introduction of a proselyte to Judaism is a mere external ceremony. "That which is born of the spirit is spirit;" the introduction of a proselyte from Gentilism or Judaism to my religion, from a religion of ceremonies and external rites to a religion of the heart and life, is, on the contrary, a spiritual, that is, an intellectual and moral change.

This construction deserves respect from its agreement with other parts of the scriptures. It accords with our Saviour's discourse with the Samaritan woman, when, in reply to her inquiry, whether Jerusalem or Gerizim was the place where men ought to worship, he assures her, that the hour was coming and now had come, when men should not be confined according to her limited views, either to the one or the other of these places, in their worship of God, but when the true worshippers should in every place worship the Father in spirit and in truth.* It ac-

* John iv. 21—24.

cords well with the observation of Jesus to those, who mistook his meaning, when he told them, that except they ate his flesh and drank his blood, they had no life in them. When they revolted at this saying, he observes, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life; they have a figurative meaning, and imply the reception and observance of my doctrine.* It accords well with the explanation, which St. John himself gives of the phrase, '*being born of God*,' in his first epistle. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;† and again, Beloved, let us love one another; for every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.‡ In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.§ We here see, that to receive Jesus as a divinely commissioned messenger, is synonymous with 'being born of God,' and 'being born of God' is to love mankind and to work righteousness. There does not appear to be the slightest allusion to a supernatural and irresistible operation of the divine spirit. The phrase '*being born of God*,' intends nothing more than the reception of a religion, devised in his mercy, established by a divine wisdom and power deputed to Jesus of Nazareth, and which he preached to mankind in the name of God; as the phrase being 'begotten of Paul' and being his son, as he calls Timothy and Onesimus, or his children, as he sometimes calls his converts, intends nothing more than their reception of the religion which he preached to them.

Jesus proceeds to say to Nicodemus, Marvel not that I said unto thee, you must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit. v. 7, 8.

It is the object of Jesus, in this remark, to allay the surprise which Nicodemus appears to have manifested at his discourse. by teaching him in a comparison, drawn from a common occurrence, that this change of his views and character, though the progress of it were imperceptible, might nevertheless be easily ascertained. Thus we hear the sound of the wind and know that it is passing us, but know not how it is impelled, from what place it comes, nor whither it proceeds. So with regard to the change, through which it is necessary for you to pass, in order to become my disciple, it will be easily discovered when it is produced, but we know too little of the human mind to determine with exactness the manner in which it is accomplished; or,

* John vi. 53, 63. † 1 John v. i. ‡ iv. 7. § iii. 10.

though the effects of my religion in every convert to it will be apparent, yet as there is an unlimited diversity in the characters and circumstances of individuals, it is impossible to point out the particular manner in which the motives, instructions, promises, or threatenings of the gospel operate to produce these effects.

While Nicodemus still appears not to comprehend the observations of Jesus, he says to him, Art thou a master or a teacher in Israel, and knowest not these things? v. 10. This address of Jesus indicates, that he had been speaking not of a supernatural and extraordinary event, but of one which is ordinary and common; of a change of character, similar to such as Nicodemus, a man advanced in life, whose rank and office implied intelligence and observation, must have witnessed in his intercourse with mankind; a change from ignorance to knowledge, and from vice to virtue.

The foregoing explanation of this difficult and obscure passage of scripture is offered with diffidence, and a disposition to receive any more consistent and rational interpretation. I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.

If the exposition, which has been given, be admitted, the passage yields no support to the doctrine of regeneration by a supernatural, divine, irresistible and arbitrary influence of the Holy Spirit, in favour of which doctrine it is so often and confidently produced. If this be the doctrine of the scriptures, it must be proved by other passages than this; perhaps our examination of this may contribute to the better understanding of other passages with a reference to this subject. If, on the other hand, this illustration of this passage should not be admitted, it is still a serious question, how far remarks which were addressed particularly to Nicodemus, a Jew and a Pharisee, and one concerned in the government of Judea at the time of the appearance of Christ, may be properly applied to the cases of persons who have been born and always educated under the full light of the gospel; who can have but faint ideas of his views and feelings, and to whom, consequently, christianity presents itself under totally different circumstances.

There is, however, one important view in which this subject is useful to christians in every age. In a most striking manner it calls our attention to the spiritual nature of the religion, which we profess; it reminds us of the utter insufficiency of any privileges or external services alone to recommend us to the favour of God; and it urges the indispensible necessity of sanctifying the Lord our God in our hearts.* The fruit of the Spirit, that

* 1 Pet. iii. 15.

is, of the religion of Christ, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.* H.

THE MODE OF OPPOSING LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY, EXEMPLIFIED.

The Christian Public are well aware, that the favourite and almost the only method of opposing liberal Christianity in this neighbourhood, has hitherto been by exciting violent prejudices against it and making men afraid of it. It is equally well known, we are sorry to add, that the means employed to produce this effect have not always been the most christianlike, gentlemanly, or honourable. We have thought it might do good to copy into our work some specimens of this. We do not know any better way of exposing such writers than the republishing of their own words.

Three of the latest examples which occur to us, we beg our readers to look at carefully. The first is a notice of *Wakefield's Translation of the New Testament* from the *Boston Recorder* of March 25, 1820. Let any man of good feelings and decent manners say what impression it is calculated to make.

"It is understood that in Maine, there is a man employed in obtaining subscriptions for a *new translation* of the New Testament; and from all we can gather, 'the hand of' some modern 'Joab is in this thing.' The translation, as we are informed, is designed to nourish that *monstrous birth of reason*, Socinianism, which can neither be made to thrive nor live, by the 'milk' or 'strong meat' of God's word, and absolutely requires a sort of minced dish every now and then, prepared at the shop of some semi-philosophical and semi-deistical confectioner, under the name of Improved Version, or New Translation. As it is the design of this subscription paper to give the most extended circulation to the scriptures, 'cut and carved' according to 'man's device,' without a particle of 'the Life' remaining in them, or one mark of the Holy Spirit on them, we deem it our duty to caution our readers against the imposition. 'Wherefore will ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not.'"

* Galatians v. 22—25.

The next example is from the Panoplist of August 1819. It is less inconsistent with the known character of this work, than the former example with the character of the Recorder.

"It is worthy of notice, that Socinians can make catechisms, although they are so much in the habit of inveighing against them. This we had known from what had taken place in Boston and the neighbourhood, within a few years past. *Perhaps there has not been a more fruitful topic of discussion, in the pulpits of the liberal party, than the enormous mischiefs of teaching children catechisms, and the frightful sin and egregious folly of making a catechism. While the attack upon catechisms was carried on in a most fierce and violent manner*, several of the clergy, who had been foremost in the attack, actually made new catechisms and published them with their names; some for their particular congregations, and others for the world at large. To reconcile their professions with their conduct would be a task, which we are not required to perform."

There is nothing to be said respecting this, except that the statement it contains is altogether false. We will not trust ourselves to speak of a man who is capable of so positively asserting what he could not know to be true, and what he probably did know to be false; especially when it is impossible that it should have been done from a good motive.

It is but fair to add a paragraph, which follows that which we have quoted.

"It is manifest, however, that the preaching and the conduct proceeded from the same hostility to the principal catechisms in circulation. If these could not be driven from circulation entirely, it was hoped that they might be supplanted to some extent by little manuals of a different tendency; and it was easy to see, that the objection was not so much to catechisms themselves, as to the *kind* of catechisms in which the public had confidence. We suppose that not fewer than a dozen of these rivals to the Assembly's Catechism, and the catechisms of Dr. Watts, have made their appearance within a few years."

There is more truth in this. Undoubtedly there is no objection "to catechisms in general," but there are exceedingly strong objections to "certain kinds of catechisms." And there are few lovers of scriptural christianity, who would not rejoice to see *The Assembly's Catechism* supplanted by one of a different tendency.

The third example is from the Christian Spectator of May 1820. It is less remarkable than the two preceding, and we trust is not to be regarded as indicating what is in future to be the style of that respectable work.

"But, unfortunately, his* views of religion are undefined and wavering. What shall we think of the man who bestows equal applause on the soft *sentimentalism* of Alison, in which not one trace of the gospel can be found, and the deep-toned energy of Chalmers, which 'pierces to the dividing asunder' the closest recesses of guilt? With such a man the christian religion is but a name, a mere appendage of a more civilized state of society, ———useful in adding its weighty sanctions to the moral code, and therefore entitled to respect, but *without one particle of authority over the understanding or the heart.* Multitudes of such men we have, especially in one part of *our* country, who reject with scorn the appellation of infidel, who found churches to the one Jehovah, and propagate their *want* of faith with the most eager zeal, while they refuse their homage to Him whom all the angels are commanded to worship, make his blood of no effect as an expiation for sin, contemn the influences, and deny the existence of his Holy Spirit, and reduce the gospel of his grace to a mere code of moral precepts."

Our readers will draw their own inferences from these extracts, which afford a fair sample of the efforts which are made to keep alive such prejudices against Unitarians, as shall prevent a deliberate and candid inquiry into the correctness of their sentiments. Much has been done, and much will be done in this way to hinder the progress of the truth. We expect it; but it does not discourage us. The same arts were used by the orthodox Jews in the time of our Saviour, to prevent a fair examination of his claims, and crush his religion in its infancy; and they succeeded but too well for a time, notwithstanding the power of his miracles. But at length truth triumphed over prejudice; and we trust that truth will yet triumph over prejudice.

ON ORIGINAL SIN.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

Sir—Should you think the following worthy of a place in the Christian Disciple, please insert it.

A Friend to the Christian Disciple.

Would that party of christians, who have seen fit to style themselves "the orthodox," and their dissenting brethren, form an explication of the scripture doctrine of "original sin," in

* Speaking of the author of *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk.*

which they would agree, the contention "about *fundamentals*," to adopt the phraseology of good, honest Richard Baxter, "by which the Christian world, for more than a thousand years, has been plagued," would cease. In this case, it is evident that little, if aught, would remain, that could excite them to interested dispute.

For many years, I have been fully convinced, that the "orthodox" explication of this doctrine is not true. When Professor Stuart, in his strictures on a part of Mr. Channing's sermon, gave to the public a pledge that the whole of that sermon should be reviewed, it excited in my mind an high expectation, that the doctrine of original sin would be ably discussed. For, as is well known, the superstructure of Calvinism has no other basis for its support, than *that particular* explication, which the friends of that system give of the scripture doctrine of original sin. It constitutes the foundation of their building, the key-stone of their arch. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that the view of this subject, given in the Letters of Professor Woods, recently published, is the result of the united efforts of the gentlemen, who are at the head of the Theological Institution at Andover. To those who are acquainted with the writings of President Edwards, and of others on this subject, it cannot be necessary to observe, that this production is very far from meeting the public expectation.

My object, however, is not to attempt a review of Dr. Woods's letters, but to state, among several views which my mind contemplates, one particular view of the subject, which has long set my heart perfectly at rest, in the utter rejection of the orthodox explication of the doctrine.

The explication which our orthodox brethren give of this doctrine, is, virtually, this, viz.:—That, in consequence of the sin of Adam, God has caused the fact to exist, that each of his posterity enters existence possessed of a corrupt moral nature, which is the source of his actual sins. That, in this state, mankind are objects of abhorrence in the view of their Maker, and that he will consign them to everlasting destruction, unless, by an act of grace, he should renew their hearts, and thus dry up the fountain whence their evil actions proceed. And respecting this act of grace, they teach, that although it is passed in favour of some individuals of the human race, yet the number of those who are thus distinguished is very small, in comparison of the whole family of mankind.

If this doctrine be true, it evidently is a doctrine of infinite moment; whether the subject be viewed in its relation to man, or as it refers to the *moral* character of God. Viewed in its re-

lation to *man*, this doctrine must excite in the mind the very interesting inquiry, whether our existence is a blessing? or, whether our existence is not, or may not prove, or probably will not become to us, of all possible calamities, infinitely the greatest? And is it possible, that views like these, *can* lead man to that reverence of God, and to those *grateful* sentiments towards him, in which religion essentially consists?

Not only in its relation to *man*, but this doctrine is of infinite moment as it refers to the *moral* character of *God*. For, if we admit this doctrine to be true, who can refrain from inquiring, with most extreme solicitude, Where are evidences to be found, that God is just, that he is benevolent, and, as we are taught to believe, that he has a "tender regard toward the work of his hands?" And why are we taught to call him our *Father?*

The doctrine of original sin according to the orthodox explication, is then evidently a doctrine of infinite moment, both in its relation to man and as it bears on the moral character of God. Were it, therefore, a doctrine of truth, it must have been perfectly known as such to that *great Teacher*, who came from God to shew unto man the way of salvation. Apprehending the subject in all its magnitude and importance, he must, in his *personal* ministry, have treated the doctrine in the manner in which our orthodox brethren do. It must have been implied, and very *strongly* implied, in every sermon he preached. It must have been *professedly* the subject of *many*, and indeed of *most* of his sermons; and on the subject he would have employed the *force* of his divine reasoning and eloquence. But, I ask, was this the fact? No man, who is acquainted with our Saviour's sermons, if he have any regard to truth, or to his own reputation, will dare to assert, that the doctrine of original sin, agreeably to the *orthodox* mode of explication, is to be found in any of the sermons of our Saviour. And, if not taught by *him*, the doctrine most evidently *is not a Christian doctrine.*

In opposition to this statement, our orthodox brethren say, that there are several passages (they admit them to be few) in the sermons of our Saviour, which, agreeably to their exposition, make it evident that our Saviour admitted their doctrine of hereditary depravity. It may be replied, that the passages to which they allude, will very fairly bear a different interpretation from that which they give to them. But, not to contest with them the point, whether their interpretation, or ours, is the most correct, we will concede to them these passages in their own mode of explication. But, even in this case, what is the amount of their argument? It is simply this; that in the sermons of the great Teacher, two or three passages are found, which, by a

particular mode of interpretation, seem to imply that Jesus admitted the doctrine of hereditary depravity. But, can any person believe, if the doctrine of original sin according to the Calvinistic explication were true, that *He* who came into this world to "teach us of the Father," would have treated in so very cursory a manner a doctrine, which, if it *is* true, is evidently a doctrine of infinite moment, not merely as it relates to man, but also as it bears on the moral character of God?

Not satisfied, as it would seem, with this reason, in accounting for the fact that Jesus, in his sermons, treated the subject of original sin in a manner so very different from that mode which *they* adopt, our orthodox brethren assign another reason. Our Saviour, say they, in his personal ministry, did not intend to give to mankind a full view of his religion. He gave them the *first* part of christianity only, reserving further communication, which would complete his system of moral instruction, to be conveyed to mankind after his ascension, by the ministry of his *apostles*. And, although it should be admitted, say they, that Jesus in his personal ministry did *not* plainly and explicitly teach the doctrine of hereditary depravity, yet his apostle Paul explicitly taught the doctrine, and with great emphasis dwelt on the subject. In the view of this statement, the question will arise, Did this *first* part of christianity comprise so essentially the system, that a practical belief of it rendered men christians, and prepared them for heaven? Or, was this first part of christianity so defective, that men might yield to it a practical belief, and yet remain in the "gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity?" If it should be said, that a practical belief of that Christianity, which, in his personal ministry, our Saviour gave to mankind, *will* render men christians, and prepare them for heaven, they then admit that the doctrine of original sin, in *their* view of the subject, is not a christian doctrine, or at least that the inculcation of it is not necessary to the conversion of sinners. Or, should they assume the other side of the question, and say, that the christianity given to mankind personally by its author, was so partial and defective a view—partook so little of the essence of the system, that persons might believe in it and yet *not* be christians, they, in this case, reflect the highest reproach on the character of our Saviour, as the great Prophet of his church.

If our Saviour taught not the doctrine of original sin, in the Calvinistic sense of this article, it cannot be possible that his *apostles* taught the doctrine. Should we, therefore, by our explication of any of their writings, state them to have taught the doctrine, one of the following inferences must be true; viz. Either in the passages in question, the apostles spoke *not* in the name

and by the authority of our divine Master, but were *impostors;* or we have wholly misapprehended the true import of these passages in their writings; and which of these most probably is the fact, every man must decide for himself.

Of the very few passages in the sermons of our Saviour, which have ever been adduced for the purpose of giving support to the Calvinistic view of the doctrine of original sin, by far the most important is that passage in the gospel of John, 3d chap. 3d ver.—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again," &c. In view of this passage the question will arise, Was it necessary that Adam and Eve, after their fall, should have been "*born again*" in order to enter into the kingdom of God? If it was, as I presume our orthodox brethren will admit, then persons may be the proper subjects of regeneration, who were not born with a corrupt nature; of course this passage of our Saviour constitutes no argument in proof of *hereditary depravity;* and, consequently, it could not have been intended by *him*, who, in point of *accuracy* as well as of force, "spake as never man spake," as an argument in support of that doctrine.

In the case of our first parents it is seen, that actual transgression, without any previous corrupt *nature*, reduced *them* to such a state of moral ruin, as rendered them the proper subjects of that grace which is displayed through a Mediator; and of divine energy, employed on the powers of their understanding and heart, to be indispensible means of preparing them for heaven. It is not, therefore, necessary to suppose, that *our* entrance on life in a state of moral depravity is requisite to render *us* the proper subjects of his power, who is "*mighty to save.*" Our *voluntary transgression* produces that derangement of our intellectual and moral powers, which renders it absolutely necessary to our future happiness, that we become the subjects of that moral process, which, in the very figurative language of the scripture, is sometimes termed a "*new birth;*" but which is often designated by the plain, simple, easily-comprehended word, "*repentance.*"

If the foregoing remarks are just, it is submitted to you, whether that very celebrated passage of our Saviour is not fairly wrested out of the hands of our orthodox brethren.

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR.

No. III.

"I suppose," says Wardlaw, "it will readily be admitted, that *if there be a plurality of persons at all* in the one Godhead, that plurality is a trinity. For although the views of the doctrine of the trinity, held by those who have attempted to explain it, have been various, yet trinity and unity (taking the latter term in the sense affixed to it by antitrinitarians) are properly the only two hypotheses on the subject. All who believe the doctrine of a *plurality* to be taught in the scriptures, believe that plurality to consist of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. None have believed in more, none in fewer. Plurality and trinity may, therefore, on this question be considered as convertible terms; and consequently every proof of a plurality as proof of a trinity. On this principle, as the whole of the evidence of the divinity of Christ, is evidence of a plurality, it might all be considered as bearing on the point, which it is now my object to establish—the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit."

According to this writer,* then, whoever becomes convinced by any means of the existence of two beings, agents, or persons, (however denominated) in the Godhead, is bound to admit without further proof, the existence of a third. That is, he is to acknowledge an object of worship without any particular proof of his existence.

How conclusive such reasoning is, appears from this, that it will prove to equal satisfaction the affirmative or the negative of the same proposition. In the arguments quoted above it is implied, that in order to the reception of the doctrine of the personality and deity of the spirit, no particular proof direct to that point is needed. Suppose, then, that in examining the evidence of the trinitarian doctrine, one attends to the proof of the deity of the spirit before that of the son. If he finds that no sufficient evidence is given for the former, why may he not reason thus:—There are only two opinions on the subject of the Godhead; that there are three persons in it, and that there is but one. The deity of the Holy Spirit (one of the three alleged persons) is not proved. There is therefore but one person, and the evidence of the deity

* And according to Professor Stuart, "All difficulties, in respect to the doctrine of the trinity, are essentially connected with proving or disproving the divinity of Christ" (p. 45. 3d ed.) "When this (the divine nature of Christ) is admitted or rejected, no possible objection can be felt to admitting or rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity." p. 59.

of the son needs not to be examined.—The argument is equally good on either side of the question. A notable one then doubtless it must be.

We are not so much surprised that according to the false modes of interpreting scripture which prevail, some persons should believe themselves convinced that Christ is the supreme God; but we are surprised that the opinion should be professed, with scarcely a shadow of evidence in its support, that there is a third person equally supreme God with the Father and Son,—the Holy Ghost.

It would seem that the existence of a Being for whom divine honours are claimed, was a subject of primary consideration. Yet the proof of the personality of the Spirit is scarcely touched on by orthodox writers. In that budget of blunders, Jones on the Trinity, not the slightest reference is made to it. The author actually proceeds as if the existence of a living Being, distinct from the Father, called the Holy Spirit, was not called in question, and as if the only dispute was whether this person were divine.* Nay, what is very remarkable, the identical texts which prove that the words Holy Ghost, when spoken of a person, are used, not of a distinct person, but of God the Father himself, this writer assuming that they are separate persons, employs to prove that both are equally God.

We do not say that the phrase *Spirit of God*, and others similar, never stand for a divine person. We think it certain that they do;—for God THE FATHER. (1 Cor. ii. 11. Ps. cxxxix. 7. Comp. Is. lxiii. 10. with Num. xiv. 11. and Ps. lxxviii. 56.) We are not now to point out the various meanings of the phrase, but refer for them to an essay on the subject in the fourth number of this work. The ground we maintain is, that whenever it means a living Being, it means God the Father, and herein we dissent from the orthodox. It is indispensable to the defence of their belief, that they should prove that the phrase is used in scripture to denote a person in places where it is *not* applied to God the Father. To the support of this proposition, though of vital importance to the doctrine of the trinity, they have not always given any attention. When they have, it has been principally by the use of texts, in which the figure of personification, so common among the sacred writers, is applied to divine influences on the soul. For the explanation of these texts, as we should not be able to give it in a shorter compass, nor with equal force and clearness, we refer to the essay just named. (Disciple, New Series, Vol. I. p. 260.)

* He not only implies but affirms this, discovering a disgraceful ignorance, or a singular effrontery. "The church affirms the spirit to be in God, as a person of the same divine nature; the Arians deny it, and will understand him to be out of God, not a *person of the divine nature*, but *one* inferior to, and distinct from it."

"The Holy Ghost," it is said by trinitarians, "is distinctly spoken of as *coming*, *testifying*, *receiving*, *showing*, *teaching*, *hearing*, *speaking*, &c. all of which evidently imply personal agency."

Time, we reply, is distinctly spoken of as *coming* (Luke ix. 51) and *prayers* and *alms* (Acts x. 4.) A *song* is distinctly spoken of as *testifying* (Deut. xxxi. 21.) and the *pride* of *Israel* (Hos. v. 5.) The *heavens* are distinctly spoken of as *receiving* (Acts iii. 21.) and the *earth* (Gen. iv. 11.) If these words "imply personal agency," then are *time*, *prayers*, *alms*, &c. persons. One, who does not understand that according to the common use of language such offices are predicable of things inanimate, may, by turning to a concordance, find applied to things never suspected to possess a personal existence, the same words, on which, when applied to the Holy Spirit, the proof of its personality is founded.

This is not trifling, but a sober unexceptionable answer to an argument seriously urged. By such reasoning as this is a doctrine of such moment (if it were true) as that of the trinity, defended.

There are three texts of principal note, in which divine attributes are thought to be ascribed to the Spirit in such manner as to lead to the belief of its having a distinct personal existence, viz. Psalm cxxxix. 7. 1 Cor. xii. 11. Heb. ix. 14.

I. *Omnipresence* is thought to be ascribed to a person called the Spirit in Ps. cxxxix. 7. "*Whither shall I go from thy Spirit*, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

Who is so blind with system as not to see that by the *spirit of God*, is meant here the mind of God, or God himself, according to the same use of the word *spirit* as in 1 Cor. xvi. 18. "*They have refreshed my spirit and yours*," i. e. they have refreshed *me and you*. Gal. vi. 18. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with *your spirit*," i. e. *be with you*. 1 Cor. ii. 11. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save *the spirit of a man* that is in him," i. e. the MAN HIMSELF.* 1 Sam. xx. 4. "Whatever *thy soul* desireth, I will even do it for *thee*." Jer. xiv. 19. "Hath *thy soul* loathed Zion;" evidently the same as, hast *thou* loathed Zion. And the holy psalmist himself explains in the following verse, that this is the sense in which he uses the phrase, for he goes on to say, "If I ascend up into heaven, *thou* art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, *thou* art there."

The same thing is affirmed in verse 7th, of God's *presence*, and in verse 10th of his *hand*, and his *right hand*, which is declared

* The apostle goes on: "Even so the things of God knoweth no one but the spirit of God." Unless we will maintain that the spirit of a man is a different person from that man, we must (if we allow any propriety in the analogy pointed out by the apostle,) grant that the Spirit of God is not a different person from God.

in verse 7th of his *spirit*, viz. that they reach throughout the universe. If then his *spirit* is proved by this passage to be a distinct divine person, his *presence*, &c. are equally proved to be so. The argument favours the existence of three other divine persons, in the same degree as it teaches the personality of the Spirit.

II. The *power of willing* is understood to be ascribed to the Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 11. "All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally *as he will*;" and thence it is argued that the Spirit is a person.

The reader of the New Testament in the original, need not be informed that the proper rendering of the last clause in this passage is by the neuter pronoun; "dividing to every man severally as *it* will." It is thus rendered by Wakefield. The context shows, that spiritual gifts are the subject of the apostle's discourse. There is nothing to lead one to the idea, that a person is spoken of, except the supposed ascribing of the faculty of volition to the Spirit. The argument then is this:

Only a person can be said to will.

The Spirit is said to will.

Therefore the Spirit is a person.

The major proposition,—that only a person can be said to will,—is indefensible.

By a figurative, but common and intelligible use of language, the will, in strictness of speech exerted by the agent, is predicated of the instrument. We should not think the phraseology peculiar, if it were said that the sword of the Lord slays whom it will, his eyes look where they will, his feet go where they will, his hand does what it will, &c.; nor should we conclude thence, that his sword, his eyes, his feet, and hand were persons. When his Spirit is said then to distribute as it will, why, for the sake of explaining a form of language so familiar, should we resort to the bold hypothesis of introducing a new person into the Godhead? *The flesh* is said to have a will, (John i. 13.) In John iii. 8., the *wind* is said to blow "where it listeth." Is the wind a thinking agent? The last clause of James iii. 4. literally translated, is, "*Whither soever the impulse* or *the will* of the governor listeth." Is the impulse or will of the governor therefore a person? 1 Pet. iii. 17., literally rendered, reads thus: "It is better *if the will of God will*." Is the *will of God* a separate person? No more then can this be affirmed of the *Spirit of God*.

III. *Eternal existence* is understood to be ascribed to the Spirit in Heb. ix. 14. "The blood of Christ who, *through the eternal Spirit*, offered himself without spot unto God," &c. It is hence inferred, that the Spirit is a divine person.

Wakefield, we cannot find on what authority, reads ἀμωμου (spotless) for αἰωνίου (eternal.) There is considerable weight of evidence to show that ἁγίου (holy) and not αἰωνίου, was the original word used by the apostle. But granting, as on the whole seems probable, that the text ought to stand as in the common version, we do not find much speciousness in the argument by which the personality of the Spirit is inferred from it. The reasoning is merely this; that to nothing but a person, is eternity ascribed in scripture. The Spirit therefore, having eternity ascribed to it, must be a person. Now the fact is manifestly otherwise. Nothing is more common in scripture than to predicate eternal existence of the attributes of God, and of inanimate things. The divine *power* and *purpose* are said to be *eternal*, (Rom. i. 20. Eph. iii. 11.) *Eternal redemption*, (Heb. ix. 12.) The *hills* and *mountains* are called *everlasting*; (Gen. xlix. 26. Hab. iii. 6.) and the *gospel* (Rev. xiv. 6.) God's *righteousness* is called *everlasting*, (Ps. cxix. 142.) his *kindness*, (Isai. liv. 8.) his *love*. (Jer. xxxi. 3.) His *salvation*, (Is. li. 8.) his *throne*, (Lam. v. 19.) his *dominion*, (Dan. iv. 3.) and his *mercy*, (Luke i. 50.) are from *generation* to *generation*. His *faithfulness*, (Ps. lxxxix. 1.) his *truth*, (Ps. c. 5.) his *remembrance*, (Ps. cii. 12.) and his *years* (Ps. cii. 24.) are *to all generations*. If then God's *power*, *purpose*, &c. are not proved, by being called eternal, to be separate persons, neither is his *Spirit*.

Our Lord is said to have offered himself *through or by the eternal Spirit*. By this should we not understand *by the eternal mind*, the eternal will, counsel, purpose, i. e. of God;—a sense in which the expression would be equivalent with that in Acts ii 23. iii. 18. and iv. 28. This explanation is fortified by the consideration that the apostle, in this passage, is comparing the priestly office of Christ with that of the priests of the temple, who presented their offerings according to the *temporary appointment* of God, "for *the time then present*," "*until the time of reformation*." (vv. 9, 10.)

We conclude by submitting two questions to the consideration of our readers.

The Holy Spirit, in the passage where it is most strikingly personified, (John xvi. 13.) is said *not to speak of himself, but to speak whatsoever he shall hear*. It is said to make intercession, (Rom. viii. 26.) It is represented (Gal. iv. 6.) as paying reverence to the Father. These representations are inconsistent with the orthodox doctrine of its personality and equality with the Father. When we refer to texts, which show the inferiority of the Son, we are answered, that they allude to the Son when clothed in human nature. Now it is not pretended, that the third person in the Deity ever took on him human nature. By

what use of language then, if a person equal with the Father, is he represented by the sacred writers as the Father's instrument and inferior?

Once more; if the Holy Spirit were, properly speaking, a distinct person from the Father and Son, yet God equally with them, how could our Lord have said, (Matthew xi. 27.) "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." How could he have said, (John xvii. 3.) "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," and omit all allusion to one, who, equally with his Father and himself, had the government of the world and the disposal of the final destiny of men? How could he have said, (Matt. xxiv. 36.) "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," if besides the Father, there were two omniscient persons? For if, consistently with the trinitarian hypothesis, this might be said of the Son while dwelling in the flesh, the mind of the Spirit at least was never obscured by participation in human frailty. Why, when he represents himself as coming "in his glory, *and all the holy angels with him*" to reward those "blessed of his Father," is the Holy Ghost not named; and why in none of the enumerations in scripture of all in heaven, and all in earth, is no express mention made of a Being of such importance as a person in the Godhead?

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

SPANISH INQUISITION.

We have probably heard at last of the final suppression of this infamous tribunal. A history of it by M. Llorente, published a short time since, was mentioned in the last volume of the Christian Disciple, p. 237. According to the statements in this work, it appears that from the year 1452 to 1808, 31,713 persons had, in consequence of its decrees, been burnt to death; 17,411 who had either perished in prison or effected their escape, had been burnt in effigy; and 287,622 others had been condemned to different severe punishments, such as whipping and imprisonment.—See *Bertholdt's Kritisches Journal*, B. 8. s. 332.

CHARACTER OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The following passage is from Mr. Burke; and is one specimen of those general remarks, full of wisdom, which were thrown off by his powerful mind whenever it was in action, and which are to be found scattered every where in his writings.

"The Scripture is no one summary of doctrines regularly digested, in which a man could not mistake his way; it is a most venerable, but most multifarious collection of the records of the divine œconomy, a collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books, by different authors, at different ages, for different ends and purposes.

"It is necessary to sort out what is intended for example, what only as narrative; what is to be understood literally, what figuratively; where one precept is to be controlled and modified by another; what is used directly, and what only as an argument *ad hominem;* what is temporary, and what of perpetual obligation; what appropriated to one set or one state of men, and what the general duty of Christians."

The following passage, distinguished by interesting description and truth and tenderness of sentiment, is from Bright's Travels in Hungary (pp. 133—136.) Many of our readers may recollect that the account of one incident contained in it, has been already quoted in a work deservedly popular.

"I now explained to my conductor, that he must drive me to the post-house; but when I got there, the whole yard was full of people, and I learned that the post-master, having lost his wife, was on the point of following her corpse. This, I plainly saw, would put a stop to my journey for the day, and I did not feel much disappointed, as it afforded me an opportunity of attending a ceremony which no one ought to neglect in a foreign country. After three priests, with crosses and incense boxes—followed by the coffin, and accompanied by a numerous train of mourners and boys with wax lights—had moved with solemn singing towards the burying-place, I went quickly to the inn, dismissed my waggon, and joined the procession. The place of burial was considerably elevated, at the distance of half a mile from Léva,—a solitary spot of ground, adorned only by crosses raised by the hands of affection over departed friends. As the body was laid in the ground, I thought I perceived more emotion in the spectators than usual. The rite being performed, the assembly separated during the performance of a solemn chant. The greater part retired to a still higher ground covered with vineyards,

on the summit of which a temple is erected as a memorial of our Saviour's death upon Mount Calvary. I remained a little longer than the rest, and beheld a most affecting and beautiful scene. It was the tribute paid by mothers, by children and by friends, to the remains of those who had gone before them. Tears flowed in torrents from the eyes of a mother and daughter, who kneeled by the side of a tomb which seemed to have been long the abode of him over whom they prayed. In another spot two little children cried aloud, as they lay with their faces upon a heap of earth, whilst others kissed the mould which had been lately raised.

"The loneliness of the spot,—the Carpathian chain stretched out in the distance,—the obscurity of approaching night,—the stillness of nature interrupted only by the cries of widows and of children,—were sadly, yet harmoniously, combined; and he must have been cold indeed who could witness the scene without emotion.

"These humble peasants of Hungary have, through the native promptings of the heart, so blended the memory of their departed friends with the feelings of devotion, that nations boasting of higher degrees of cultivation may respect and follow their example. We may civilize and refine away our feelings till the simple dictates of nature are completely yielded up. With the majority of mankind consolation is sought in forgetfulness; to present a variety of new objects to the mind and a constant succession of changes, is deemed the duty of a comforter. Thus the only feelings which accompany the death of a friend are supposed to be those purely selfish remembrances which recall to our minds the comforts we have lost,—reducing the whole sentiments of friendship to a standard according to which our estates, our houses, and our fortunes, hold the highest places. For my own part, I am persuaded that the human mind, which derives such satisfaction in the formation of friendships, is capable of maintaining and cherishing these emotions throughout its whole existence; and that we are truly no more pardonable in attempting to forget a friend who is dead, than we should be in forgetting one who is absent. If putting aside all unintelligible motives, there is one which can be felt and explained, more pure than others, leading us to rejoice in our future prospects, it is the idea and hope of meeting again the friends from whom we have been separated by death.

"When I was at Berlin, during the preceding year, I followed the celebrated Iffland to the grave. Mingled with some [illegible] you might trace much real feeling. In the midst of the ceremony, my attention was attracted by a young woman, who stood

near a mound of earth newly covered with turf, which she anxiously protected from the feet of the pressing crowd. It was the tomb of her parent; and the figure of this affectionate daughter presented a monument more striking than the most costly work of art." * * * * * * * * *

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

GENTLEMEN,

Please to insert the annexed creeds in parallel columns in your Disciple. Yours, &c. JOHN.

"I believe then,

"1. That God is one, *numerically one*, in essence and attributes. In other words, that the infinitely perfect spirit, the Creator and preserver of all things, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has numerically the same essence and the same perfections, so far as we know any thing of them which can be the subject of affirmation. To particularize; The son possesses not simply a similar or equal essence and perfections, but numerically the same as the father, without division and without multiplication.

"2. The son (and so the Holy Spirit) does in some respects, *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally or logically, differ from the father."—*Stuart's Let.*

I believe then,

1. That man is one, *numerically one*, in essence and attributes. In other words, that the finite imperfect spirit, the Lord and ruler of this world, the father, son, and brother, has numerically the same essence and the same perfections, so far as we know any thing of them, which can be the subject of affirmation. To particularize; The son possesses, not simply a similar or equal essence and perfections, but numerically the same as the father, without division, and without multiplication.

2. The son (and so the Brother) does in some respects, *truly* and *really*, not merely nominally or logically, differ from the father.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

[The following verses are the composition of a gentleman well known and respected here, who is now removed to a distant sphere of usefulness and honour. They were written just before

his last visit to New England, and immediately after a severe fit of sickness.]

LINES WRITTEN ON LEAVING CHARLESTON FOR THE SEASON.

Farewell, awhile, thou hospitable spot!
Farewell, my own adopted dwelling-place!
Scene of my future consecrated lot,
And destin'd circuit of my earthly race.

Farewell, ye friends, who hung so long and true,
With sleepless care, around my fever'd bed,
And ye, from whom a stranger's title drew
Profuse attentions, delicately shed.

Yet why a stranger? since no other home
Remains for me; ev'n now, deprest, I fly,
For the last time through youthful haunts to roam,
And snatch the breezes of my native sky.

Yes, dear New England! help me from thy breast
To wean these childish yearnings, ere we part;
Help me these chords to snap, these ties to wrest,
So wound, and stampt, and woven in my heart.

A few more bounds along thy rocky shore,
A few more pensive walks among thy streams,
A few more greetings from dear friends of yore,
A few more dreams—and then, no more of dreams——

Come, sacred, solid duty! at thy call,
My cheerful will submissively shall flow,
So thou, great Source of strength and light to all,
Lead me the awful way my feet must go.

Teach me to bear the Christian Herald's part,
To set the slaves of sin and error free,
To guide each doubting, soothe each aching heart,
And draw a listening, willing flock to Thee!

REVIEW.

ARTICLE VII.

An examination of the charges made against Unitarians and Unitarianism by the Right Rev. Dr. Magee, Bishop of Raphoe, in his discourses and dissertations on atonement and sacrifice. By Lant Carpenter, L.L.D. Bristol, [Eng.] 1820.

The work of Dr. Magee on Atonement has acquired considerable reputation in this country, as well as in Great Britain, and by a numerous body of christians is regarded as of high authority. That it displays learning and ability, we are by no means disposed to deny: but it is written in a tone of dogmatism, which, with many, is taken for evidence of truth; and it will be found, that his assertions, as well as his arguments, require cautious examination. It is not, however, our intention to enter at all into the consideration of its merits as a theological treatise, or of the truth or error of the system, which it is intended to maintain. But widely as the work has been circulated, and triumphantly as it has been appealed to as an unanswerable defence of orthodoxy, it becomes a debt to justice to expose the gross misrepresentations and abuse both of the views and characters of that class of christians, who are now generally known as Unitarians. This is the design of Dr. Carpenter in the volume before us; a labour indeed sufficiently irksome and ungrateful, but which, we think, he has accomplished in a manner, which entirely vindicates the propriety and necessity of his undertaking it, and which, when we consider the constant provocation he must have found to a different spirit, is highly honourable to his meekness and forbearance.

"If the Dean of Cork,"* says Dr. Carpenter, "is to be credited, the Unitarians as a body, and the avowed defenders of Unitarianism in particular, are destitute of every quality, which can render them deserving of attention. The opinion, which he pronounces of us, e cathedrâ, has been reverberated in every possible direction; his

* It may be observed, that at the commencement of Dr. Carpenter's work, Dr. Magee was Dean of Cork; but before the publication of the whole of it, he was promoted to the Bishopric of Raphoe. This is noticed, to explain the different titles, by which he is distinguished in different parts of the volume.

statements have been resorted to as authority, and even the candid have sometimes been unwarily led astray by his representations, and supposing all that he says to be true and accurate, have thought themselves justified in warning others, lest they should be ensnared by our specious devices. That we are destitute of learning and science, of all the characteristics of a sound understanding, and every principle of piety and humility, and that we are therefore incompetent judges of christian truth—he has repeatedly said or insinuated; and he is believed by thousands, who have never witnessed the benignant influence of Unitarianism on the heart and life, who have never felt its invigorating, enlightening influence on the understanding, who have never examined for themselves the evidence adduced against us from our own writings, and still less perused our works, and weighed our arguments, with the disposition to know what we believe, and on what our faith is founded." p. 54.

Such is the general account given by Dr. Carpenter of the manner in which the Unitarians as a body are represented by Dr. Magee; and which he fully proves by numerous examples. "He has thought proper to speak of them in various places, indiscriminately and without exception, as if they were the insidious enemies of christianity and degraders of the Saviour. 'A conspiracy,' he says, 'the most deep and deadly has been formed against christianity; and its defenders are called upon, not merely to resist the avowed invader, who assails the citadel from without, but *the concealed and treacherous* foe, who undermines the works, or tampers with the garrison within.' "

Dr. Carpenter with a temperate, but most righteous indignation, repels these gross insinuations, and adds, "Lest any one, who has not read the discourses and dissertations of the Dean of Cork, should imagine that my strictures are marked with an uncalled-for severity, I will give him another specimen or two of his abusive language. More will appear as we proceed."

"The modern Socinian, who calls himself Unitarian, is, under the name of Christian, the decided *enemy of Christianity;* and under the guise of a translator of the New Testament, a *deliberate falsifier* of the Gospel."—*Dr. Magee's Postcript*, p. 365.

And in reference to certain objectionable expressions of some foreign critics, which he adduces to throw a stigma upon the English Unitarians, and in reply to the expressions of devout reverence for the scriptures, not more eloquent than sincere, which are frequent in the writings of the latter, he offers this most illiberal and indecent inquiry. "When, I say, all these things are considered, and when we find the Bible thus *contemned* and *rejected* by the gentlemen of this new light, and a new and more convenient gospel carved out for themselves, can the occasional *profession* of reverence for scripture as the word of

God, be treated in any other light, than as *a convenient mask*, or as *an insulting sneer.*"

We make no comments upon language of this kind. It is far below our indignation. We only adduce it as an example, among many, of the manner in which the author of the work on atonement has allowed himself to speak of a class of his fellow christians, who as a body have been excelled by none, for their laborious, faithful, conscientious investigation of the scriptures; who have shown their reverence for the word of God by lives consecrated to its study, and ennobled and adorned by the spirit it enjoins.

A writer, who undertakes to censure with so much vehemence, the characters and views of a whole class of men, especially of his fellow christians, is bound to possess himself with the most accurate knowledge of the facts, on which he grounds his charges. Yet from want of this, Dr. Magee is betrayed into the grossest misrepresentations; and sometimes leaves to candour itself no other alternative, but that of ascribing to pure ignorance what could not otherwise escape a much more serious accusation. Several examples of this are given by Dr. Carpenter; [see particularly pages 105—112.] But ignorance is not to be pleaded as an apology for calumny. The law of charity is not to be violated with impunity, because a man's indolence or prejudice prevent his knowing the truth; and in one of the instances to which we have referred, even this poor excuse, it would seem, is precluded; for "on his own confession." (says Dr. Carpenter, after a statement of particulars,) "the Dean of Cork is convicted of bearing false testimony." p. 106.

One of the artifices, to which Dr. Magee frequently recurs, is assuming for fact, that Unitarians are fairly represented by two or three individuals, as Dr. Priestley or Mr. Belsham; and selecting some of the most objectionable passages to be found in their works, and exhibiting them as the sentiments of the whole body.

This artifice, however, has been too frequently employed to avail much in any cause with men of common discernment or candour. "But what renders it here," says Dr. Carpenter, "peculiarly disingenuous, is that Mr. Belsham expressly disavows the station assigned him by his adversaries as organ of the sect." In the third edition of his Review (1813) in a preface, containing the author's reply to animadversions upon this Review, and of the existence of which Dean Magee could scarcely be ignorant, Mr. Belsham explicitly states, "The writer of these Letters has no authority or desire to represent himself as the organ of any party or denomination of christians. He expresses his own sentiments explicitly and without reserve; and he trusts

calmly and candidly. *No society, nor any individual, are in the slightest degree responsible for any thing which he has written.*"

On this subject, so often misunderstood or mistated, we think it proper here to remark. It will hardly be supposed, that christians, whose distinguishing peculiarity is the rejection of human authority in matters of religion, should rest with a blind confidence on the opinions of any of their fellow-christians, or that, holding sacred the injunction "to call no man Master upon earth," they should admit that their views could be fully represented by the views of any individual whatever. Unitarians profess to think and judge for themselves; and while they agree in the grand distinguishing doctrine of the complete unity and unrivalled supremacy of the only wise, living, and true God, there exists on many other subjects a considerable diversity of sentiment. There are many, who differ wholly from Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham in their views of the person of Christ, and the nature of his mediation: and there are many too, who, in general according with these gentlemen, are far from approving the expressions they have sometimes unhappily employed. We can all honour their labours, their talents, and virtues, (for they are many and great) while we reject some of their speculations, and regret the evil, that in some of their writings may be mingled with their good.

It is in his remarks upon some of the works of these gentlemen, and particularly of Dr. Priestley, that Dr. Magee has indulged to the extent his unfairness and illiberality. By mangled quotations, by affixing a meaning to the most important word, different from the author's meaning; by giving his own representation of the author's words, *when he professes to give the words themselves; connecting distant and divided sentences into one quotation;*—by these and similar artifices he has contrived to violate the simplest principles of controversial, and even common equity.

We will now offer a few, out of the multitude of examples which Dr. Carpenter has adduced, to substantiate his charges against Dr. Magee of gross inaccuracy, ignorance of facts on which he grounds his accusations, and wilful misrepresentation. We use this last, rather than a harsher term, because we fear our limits may not admit of presenting the proofs with the minute details, which such an investigation seems in justice to the party accused to demand. But should our readers go over, as we have done, the whole work of Dr. Carpenter, they would see for themselves, that the proper charge to meet the demerits of this celebrated dignitary would be, not ignorance, not inaccuracy, not prejudice only, but deliberate falsehood.

The Dean of Cork often betrays the utmost ignorance of the circumstances and sentiments of the Unitarian body: and "I will cite one instance," says Dr. Carpenter, "which will show how destitute of authority his work is, though it is considered as of great authority, and numbers form by it their opinions respecting Unitarians, as well as Unitarianism.

"A Pamphlet was circulated by the Glasgow Unitarian Fund, entitled, an 'Address to the Inquirers after Truth,' &c. This tract was reprinted in the Monthly Repository in London for August 1813, with a short account of its origin by the editor, and expressions indicating his appreciation of its merits. On these circumstances Dr. Magee founds the following statement:

"'I am the more disposed to make some observations upon this pamphlet, because as far as I know, it contains the only defence of the Improved Version, that has been offered to the public in a detached form; and because the BODY of ENGLISH Unitarians have attributed to it so high a value, that not content with printing or circulating it AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PUBLIC FUND, they have superadded the publication of it in *their Magazine*; thus securing to it every degree of currency and credit, that it is the power of the *Entire Body* to bestow. *Recognized and adopted in this manner by the* WHOLE COMMUNITY *of Unitarians*, it is of course to be viewed as THEIR OWN authenticated and deliberate defence.' &c.—*Postcript*, p. 9

"If the Dean can produce," says Dr. Carpenter, "from the least esteemed of our writers, a passage parallel to this, in false reasoning and misrepresentation, he will throw greater discredit on us, than any evidence he has yet produced can warrant. For

"(I.) The GLASGOW Unitarian Fund print and circulate the address. From this fact, *the evidence of which is in the title page*, the Dean asserts that the BODY of English Unitarians have printed and circulated it at the expense of their Public Fund.

"(II.) The editor of the Monthly Repository, an individual, responsible to no one in the conducting of the Repository, and *never acting in the name of the Unitarian body*, but only for himself, thinks highly of the address, inserted it in his Journal. On this fact, and this alone, the Dean of Cork declares, that the BODY of English Unitarians published the address in their Magazine; and by this means (in which they had no concern) securing to the tract every degree of credit, that it is in the power of the ENTIRE BODY to bestow.

"(III.) Upon the groundless assumptions, already stated, the Dean proceeds to maintain, that the address having been THUS recognized and adopted by the whole community of Unitarians, it is, *of course, to be viewed as their own authenticated and deliberate defence*."—The Tract was written by an *individual*, and the body never deliberated on the subject; and after it had been printed by a *very small part* of that body, the Glasgow Unitarian Fund, it was reprinted by *another individual*, who was responsible to no one but himself. And therefore, reasons the Dean, being thus recognized, &c.—*Q. E. D.*" pages 109. 111.

Again, a notable specimen of this author's random sweeping censures occurs in his Postcript, p. 48. Having quoted some passages from Locke, to show that this eminent philosopher held views respecting the nature of Christ, which differ materially from those of the believers in his simple humanity, and another from Grotius, which few Unitarians would hesitate to employ, he asks, "What will be the reader's reflexions, when he learns that Mr. Belsham, Dr. Carpenter, and all their UNITARIAN FELLOW-LABOURERS claim these very writers as CONCURRING in *their* opinions concerning the mere human nature of Christ, and unblushingly assert this IN EVERY PUBLICATION."

"What, I would ask in return," says Dr. Carpenter, "will be his reflexions, when he learns that the *whole sentence is a tissue of false assertions. It is not true*, that Mr. Belsham ever claimed Grotius as concurring in his opinions touching the mere human nature of Christ. *It is not true*, that Dr. Carpenter ever claimed either Grotius or Locke, as concurring with him in those opinions. *It is not true*, that all their fellow-labourers do so. *It is not true*, that we do so in every publication." And for these assertions Dr. Carpenter appeals to their writings, and adds, "I will not attribute the falsehoods in the above quotation, to any thing but an unfortunate confusion of mind, produced by blind party-zeal and personal resentment; but I say, that when a man can write thus, he forfeits all claim to unsuspecting reliance on his assertions, and ceases to be a credible witness in the controversy." p. 115 note.

We have already mentioned the unfairness and illiberality of Dr. Magee in his treatment of Dr. Priestley. It would be difficult within the limits of this article to set before our readers the various evidence, by which Dr. Carpenter establishes this charge, as it is derived from a minute comparison of different quotations from the two authors. Having shown, however, and we think to the entire satisfaction of every one, who will peruse the extracts with common attention, that the sense in which Dr. Priestley uses the word "*atonement*" is in *its highest sense*, as equivalent with *satisfaction*, and especially when speaking of the "commonly received doctrine of atonement;" referring to it as to the notion of a "full satisfaction having been made to the offended God;" of an "equivalent satisfaction;" and of the "inability of God to pardon without an adequate satisfaction to his justice and the honour of his laws and government;" having shown, we say, by various proofs, that this is the only notion of atonement which Dr. Priestley combats, Dr. Carpenter remarks:

"Now the injustice of the Dean of Cork, and it is great, consists in this, that *knowing, as he could not but know*, the facts which I have stated, and himself (we beg our reader's attention to this point) *him-*

self attaching to the term atonement a notion so little in opposition to Unitarianism, that an Unitarian may embrace it (as far as it is intelligible) *without relinquishing his fundamental principle*—he represents Dr. Priestley as arguing against this notion, against which he never does argue, and appreciates the value of all his arguments and positions by this standard of his own setting up." p. 159.

In other words, the Dean of Cork declares, that Dr. Priestley opposes the doctrine of redemption by Christ,—though he held it and laid great stress upon it, in what he believed to be the scriptural sense of the term; altogether neglects Dr. Priestley's own explication of the term *atonement;* attaches to it one, in which as he must know, Dr. Priestley did not use it; and represents him as opposing the doctrine of *atonement* in the latter sense, when he knew that his arguments and statements all respected it in the former.

We might add to these several examples of *unfair quotation.* And it would seem indeed that the Dean might have been contented with taking words out of their connexion, or with omitting part of a sentence. But that he should *quote as Dr. Priestley's words what Dr. Priestley does not say*, one would have supposed impossible. This however he has done; and in the passage to which we refer, "has been guilty of two gross breaches of controversial equity. The first is, that the former clause which gives a peculiar colour to the second, *no where occurs in the Essay from which it is said to be taken*, though it is represented according to the Dean's own canon, [with respect to inverted commas as marks of quotation] as occurring in immediate continuity with the following clause;" and the second is, a repetition of the artifice we have already exposed.

We pass to one example—and it is the only one we select—of misrepresentation of Mr. Belsham.

"With an injustice," says Dr. Carpenter, "which is perhaps unrivalled in recent controversy, Dr. Magee asserts, that Mr Belsham rejects the notion of prayer; making man, as it were, independent of his Maker. This charge was made in the first edition of the 'Discourses and dissertations;' and it has been repeated in each succeeding edition." p. 408.

We have before advanced what we deemed proper, as to our decided dissent from many of the views of Mr. Belsham. Dr. Magee had an undoubted right to express his disapprobation, and had he confined himself to this, we should have found no cause for censure. But when, with a total disregard of all decency and truth, he presumes to place this gentleman, distinguished for the singular purity and integrity of his character, "among the unhappy blasphemers of the majesty of the Son of God," (*Postcript*, p. 30.;)

attributes to him "artifice and dishonesty," [p. 259.;] "bad faith, unchecked by learning, and unabashed by shame," [p. 262.;] and "*direct violations of known truth*;" [p. 311.] and, on statements principally respecting Mr. Belsham, ascribes to Unitarian writers the "calm and deliberate purpose of falsifying the word of God;" [p. 113.] we cannot waste contempt on such an antagonist, but will only in compassion remind him, that the day is coming, when for such malignant and outrageous calumny, he must render his account to God.

But the charge that Mr. Belsham rejects the notion of prayer, it should be remembered, is made against one, who in conducting the religious services of a christian congregation, performs the stated worship of the place in the substance of the Liturgy of the church of England, improved according to the plan of Dr. Samuel Clarke; against one who has published several prayers, delivered on particular occasions, "and which," says Dr. Carpenter, "if the Lord's prayer be admitted as the Christian's model of adoration and supplication, will bear a close comparison with the devout effusions of any modern writer:" against the author of several practical discourses before the public, which manifest the sentiments of rational, enlarged, and elevated piety: and in whose other writings, not solely controversial, striking indications occur of strong pervading religious principle: finally, this accusation of rejecting the notion of prayer is made against the individual, in whose charge at the ordination of a friend, we find a passage, like the following. Let it stand as an answer to the unprincipled calumny of Bishop Magee.

"And O, what will be the temper and conduct of that Minister, who sets God always before him; who in every action of his life and ministry, doth, as it were, behold the eye of the Supreme Being fixed steadily and invariably upon him for purposes the most interesting, the most awful, the most encouraging; to pity, to guide, and to succour under every difficulty; to aid every generous exertion, and to mark and frown upon every wilful neglect of duty. Under such impressions, with what earnest solicitude will a minister prepare for the duties of his office, that he may not in the sight of God, do or speak any thing unworthy of his character, that he may not offer the sacrifice of fools, or utter crude and indigested rambles in the name and in the presence of God! With what plainness and freedom, with what fortitude, with what dignity and energy, with what infinite superiority to mean and secular views, with what indifference to human applause, with what unconcern as to personal consequences, will he declare *the whole counsel of God;* not daring to conceal what he believes to be important, that so he may be clear from the blood of all men. With what diligence will he seek, with what eagerness will he embrace every opportunity of promoting the

great ends of his ministry; instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the vicious, recovering the wanderer to the paths of wisdom and virtue, administering consolation to the afflicted, confirming and establishing the sincere Christian. How will the apprehension of the divine inspection rouse him to unremitting exertions, whatever difficulties he may meet with, whatever temptations to negligence and supineness, with whatever indifference or neglect his services may be treated, whatever ungrateful treatment he may receive, or how little soever his apparent success may be! And what a tendency will this persuasion have to engage the Christian Minister often *to lift up his heart in devout aspirations after a divine assistance and blessing, and to ascribe all that is good in himself, and all the success of his ministry, to the favour of the Almighty.* Rejoicing in the confidence of having laboured faithfully, abundantly, and successfully, he will humbly and thankfully add, Yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.

"I cannot then, Sir, conclude with a better advice or wish to you than this, that *you would set the Lord always before you*, and that in the whole course of your ministry, you would study *to approve yourself to God*, to glorify his name and accomplish his will."

In addition to this admirable passage, we can only refer our readers to some forms of prayer in Mr. Belsham's "Plea for Infant Baptism," and will then ask, "Is this the language of a man, who rejects the notion of prayer?"

We will add no more to the proofs already adduced. They might easily be multiplied; though as the author of the work before us remarks, "It is one of the worst features in the controversial system Dr. Magee has adopted, that his misrepresentations are frequently so subtile, and his perversion of our arguments so refined, that what occupies him perhaps only a few lines, may require pages to develope; and that some of his most injurious charges wear the form of insinuation." Our readers will at least perceive, that if they would learn the views of Unitarians, they must rely on other testimony than that of Dr. Magee. In truth, he is not to be trusted: and we are utterly astonished, that a man, holding for years a most responsible station in the education of youth, designing his work especially for the use of students of divinity, and since promoted to one of the highest dignities in a rich and powerful church, should have descended to artifices, which in the common intercourse of life, and estimated by the lowest standard of integrity, would be regarded only as base and dishonourable. We can admit some allowances for vanity, some for prejudice, some for the spirit of party, and some for a dignitary's contempt of a dissenter. But charity itself knows no apology for wilful misrepresentation. Religion disdains it; error cannot long be sustained by it; and when the tumults of controversy are past, and the voice of con-

science is heard, we believe his Lordship will not congratulate himself on this portion of his labours, though they may have purchased for him the honours of a mitre.

ARTICLE VIII.

Report of the Board of Counsel to the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, presented at their Eighth Anniversary, June 2, 1820. Boston: Sewell Phelps, pp. 20.

We presume that no apology is necessary for again bringing the subject of the suppression of intemperance before our readers. It loses none of its importance, and ought therefore to lose none of its interest from being repeatedly and earnestly pressed upon the notice of the public. Indeed the more there is known and written of it, the more worthy does it seem to excite the attention, not merely of those who have the good of mankind at heart simply from motives of benevolence, from a love of virtue and a desire of seeing all their fellow-creatures happy, but of those also, who look upon virtue and vice in a more philosophical and calculating point of view, as affecting the constitution of society, the institutions of government, the foundations of public confidence; as elements entering into the composition of political character, and of course influencing political establishments.

It is not now necessary to say any thing to set the facts on this subject in their true light. This has been already done repeatedly in the most satisfactory manner. The extent, the progress, the causes and the consequences of intemperance have been sufficiently developed. We are fully aware of the magnitude of the evil, and of the imperious necessity of devising and adopting efficient measures for its removal. The inquiry only remains—what are these measures? This inquiry is one of great moment, and involves a variety of considerations.

The means which may be used to deter mankind from becoming addicted to any species of vice, or for reforming such as are already its subjects, are of two general kinds:—1. Those which operate by a direct appeal to the moral feelings of the individual; which are addressed to his conscience, his sense of right and wrong, his responsibility as an accountable being, his regard for religion, and for the dignity of his own nature; and 2. Those whose influence is upon more extrinsic and external considerations, which are enforced by law, by threats of civil punishment, by the fear of disgrace, of public contempt, by the loss of rank, wealth or reputation. These different means of reformation, it

must be obvious, are applicable, in the first instance, to men of very different characters, who have arrived at various stages in the career of vice. Those of the first kind, cannot have their due effect, except upon individuals who are still possessed of some delicacy of moral feeling, some susceptibility to moral impressions; for it is only through these that we can expect to amend the life by improving the internal character. Where these are obliterated, we must have recourse to those different measures which enable us to prevent crime by the arm of external power; and thus, through that indirect influence, to which human nature is always susceptible, correct bad habits and restrain evil passions, by checking their actual exercise.

Some crimes have been thought to be more properly the subjects of legal interference than others, and have been in consequence vigilantly watched by public authority, and efficient measures taken for their regular detection and punishment. These have been generally such as directly affect the security of life, of property, of personal rights, or the institutions of society. There are others which seem to have been thought the concern rather of the individual than of the public; their immediate bad effects relating to himself, his own character and situation, it has been judged right to leave them to be taken cognizance of by his own conscience, or to commit them to the operation of those moral means to which we have alluded. It is true, laws have been sometimes made with a direct view to the punishment of vices of this class, since, although primarily affecting only the character of the individual, their ultimate effect is always to encourage and promote crimes of the other stamp. But the difficulty with regard to these laws always has been, that they have not been so met and supported by public opinion, as to ensure their effectual execution. There is, in every one, a certain jealousy of public scrutiny into the minute details of private life. Men have the feeling that their characters are their own property, that their virtues and their vices are wholly their own, so far as they do not interfere with the regularity of society, that the world has no more right to controul, or even to inspect them, in the indulgence of inclinations where the consequences affect only themselves, than they have to dictate the course of their thoughts and lay down laws to govern the associations of their ideas.

In devising means for the suppression of intemperance, we are to judge of the comparative efficacy of these two methods of procedure; and it is not difficult to see, that in this particular instance, both may be probably employed with advantage, if each is properly adapted to those cases and characters on which it is calculated to have an influence. They must be applied to diffe-

rent individuals, according to the different stages at which they have arrived in their career of vice. Moral means can only be expected to operate when the habit is just forming, or when there is merely a tendency towards its formation; before that, which is at first a propensity, shall have been converted into a necessity; before the body has become tainted with disease, or the mind obdurate by custom. But even in the earliest periods, it is melancholy to know how little can be done by these means *alone;* and it is in fact only in the way of prevention that we are to expect much from them. In that way, however, they are capable of rendering the most valuable service. We can arm those against temptation, whom we could not rescue were they already involved in its toils; for if they have once yielded, like the wretched victim of the fascinations of the serpent, their struggles, their resistance are in vain; dragged on by an irresistible impulse, which seems like one of the inevitable laws of nature, they are plunged into a gulf, from which there is no escape, and beyond which there is no hope.

Even those measures which depend for their influence upon external considerations, although applicable in some degree to subjects of every class, must yet have their *principal* effect upon those who are novices in crime, who are not absolutely hardened by habit, but only on the verge of the ruin which is prepared for them. A confirmed drunkard is irreclaimable; and it is fortunate, that in this state his example has ceased to be pernicious. So far as it has any influence, it must rather tend to deter than to invite. It is the cheerful, the social stage of intemperance which has such attractions, and is so dreadfully contagious. A thorough sot is at once the most loathsome, the most despised and the most miserable wretch, that crawls between earth and heaven. The vice in him has lost its jovial and mirth-inspiring character; it is no longer a delicious and luxurious enjoyment, but the selfish gratification of a debased animal propensity. He seeks not and finds not satisfaction in his indulgencies, but a mere respite from suffering. Excess has fixed a worm in his heart, which gnaws upon the very seat of life; whose cravings can only be appeased by draughts, to which he turns like the victim of a fever, to quench, but for a moment, the thirst by which he is consumed, and cheat a short relief from intolerable agony. His life is a dreary waste—a waste he has himself created—through which he wanders as if possessed by some terrible demon; a restless, discontented being, with but one passion to gratify, and that gratification his slow but certain destruction. How horrible an existence! capable of receiving even a moment's miserable enjoyment but from one source, and every in-

dulgence bringing him one step nearer to that grave, which is opening, to close upon him in infamy and disgrace.

On such an individual, it seems almost certain, that the restraints of the law can produce no permanent amendment of character; but if judiciously framed, perseveringly executed and supported by public opinion, we conceive that their influence may be made considerable upon the less obdurate, and of great importance in preventing others, not yet contaminated, from becoming victims to the same habit. This subject has been taken up in an able and interesting manner by the Board of Counsel of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, in their Report for the present year. This paper enters into a detail of the laws which have been made at different times for the prevention of intemperance and the punishment of the intemperate; and considers the propriety and probable efficacy of this method of procedure. We propose to give an abstract of this excellent report; and in doing it shall avail ourselves largely of its language, confident that we can offer nothing on this subject so worthy of attention.

We are presented, in the first place, with a comparative view of the ancient and modern laws. In the mother country it seems that laws have existed for nearly six centuries; so that, even at so distant a period, legislative interference had become necessary and was judged expedient. Revisions of these laws were made from time to time; and at about the period of the emigration of our ancestors to this country, a statute was established, providing punishment by fine or setting in the stocks for those who were guilty of being drunk. This law invariably considered and treated drunkenness as an indictable offence; a crime in itself, and punished it as such.

The same feature is prominent in the laws which were made in Massachusetts, while a colony, for the same purposes. They were occupied chiefly with provisions for the detection and punishment of persons guilty of intemperance, and they prescribe the mode in which these provisions are to be carried into effect, making it the specific duty of particular individuals to interest themselves in their execution.

"In all these English, Colony and Province laws," says the Report, "there are two provisions, constituting their essence, not found in our modern or Commonwealth laws on this subject. 1. The former, as already observed, treated drunkenness and excessive drinking as an offence *in itself* against law, and punishable by indictment, without regard to consequences. 2. They made informing of the offence a duty by law, and in 1712 gave the selectmen a power to appoint discreet informers, and reasonably and honourably to reward them; whereas

our Commonwealth or present laws do not generally punish, or even restrain a person guilty of the offence *of being drunk*, or of *drinking to excess*—except 1. a *common* drunkard; 2. those who by *excessive* drinking *greatly injure their health*, or *endanger the loss of it*;—and 3. those who by *excessive* drinking *so lessen their estates, as thereby, with their families, to be exposed to want or to be a town charge.* In these three cases only, it is conceived, do our present laws punish or restrain the offence of intemperance, when committed not in a *licensed* house or place. (The laws as to licensed houses affect only intemperance *in them*, and licensed persons.) Therefore if a man is cautious enough not to be intemperate in a licensed house or place; not to be a common drunkard; not to drink so *excessively* as to injure his health, or not so excessively as to expose himself and family to want, or to be a town charge, he is not liable to legal punishment or even to legal restraints, though otherwise ever so intemperate. Now when a person is within any one of these three cases, he is, almost invariably, past reformation. Thus the old laws took the intemperate man in hand the first time he was drunk; the present law generally not till he is past being reclaimed. The old law made it a duty to inform, and properly encouraged the informer; the new, in most cases, leaves the execution to *volunteer* informations—very unpleasant and unpopular. Our present laws affix specific penalties to other immoralities, but none to drunkenness." p. 5.

"Several material questions here arise. First, was the principle of the ancient law a sound principle, that punished the man, as *criminal*, the first time he was drunk voluntarily, and so as to be proved in a legal manner? Surely if a person thus openly and voluntarily unfits himself to perform every duty, social, moral and religious, and enters freely on a course to make himself detestable, and a burden to others, he must be considered guilty of an offence, which his country has a right to punish and restrain, and to prevent its repetition by suitable penalties—a self-destroying offence, without excuse, and of the most pernicious kind in society; and so it has been viewed by the most enlightened nations, ancient and modern." p. 6.

We cannot doubt the correctness of this principle; if we do not act upon it, no measures we can adopt will avail us much. If we punish a man for his intemperance, only because it has brought degradation and disease upon himself, and poverty and misery on his family; if we wait to attack the cause of the mischief until all its evil consequences are produced, we may possibly have some influence on those who are yet free from the vice, but we cannot hope to reform him who is already under its sway. This is a cruel refinement of justice, by which we hesitate to prevent the cause from producing its effects when this can be done, but afterwards inflict a punishment because those effects ensue. How inhuman, how barbarous were it in the physician to withhold his remedies, even if they were harsh and painful, till disease had fastened upon the whole system, till the powers

of life were exhausted, and the means which might have once been successful, have lost their salutary influence. Yet this is the same policy as that which is pursued by our laws with regard to the intemperate; their effect is to tolerate, nay, almost encourage them, so long as repentance and reformation are possible, but when these are hopeless, the voice of public reproach, the harsh denunciations of the law are heard, but heard in vain.

"A second question arises. Is it not fit and proper to treat this vice of intemperance as our ancestors did, varying the manner of punishment according to circumstances? There can be no doubt but that the evils of intemperance are far greater now in our country, than they were in the times of the Colony and Province. Its pernicious effects and alarming extent have already been well described by this Society and others in some points of view; but they are yet to be considered in several others—to one of which in particular, the Board ask most serious attention; and that is, the manifest injustice done to all the virtuous part of the community, by suffering this vice to prevail as it does; producing a state of things in which, in fact, the virtuous are made slaves to the vicious in various ways. But few societies in our country, or even families, exist, which have not experienced, or do not experience, the pernicious effects of this vice of intemperance—their frugal and industrious, moral and virtuous members being constantly punished and afflicted by means of this brutal vice in other members. In all ages and countries it has been found, that this scourge of mankind will inevitably increase, as the means of indulgence increase, as the laws are lax, and as vice is connived at, either from a fear of too much infringing the citizens' civil and political liberty, or from any other cause. As to the easy obtainment of the means of intemperance, it is a fact, which merits serious attention, that in most parts of our country one day's labour furnishes the means of a week's gross intemperance. When such earnings are applied to the necessaries and comforts of life, in a prudent way, every American may truly say, we live in a happy land; but when applied to extend this vice, he must regret that a day's labour affords the means of so many days of savage intemperance. View it only in relation to mere *pecuniary* interests and equal rights among fellow-citizens; what is produced by it but extreme injustice and a miserable waste of property, that ultimately falls on the prudent and industrious? as they, generally and almost of course, acquire and preserve property, and principally support the poor and bear the public burdens; and as the vicious and intemperate, generally and almost of course, are poor and pay but a trifling part of the public expenses. Besides, the latter are always drawing on the charity of the former, and if some, in fact, do not ask it, yet their wretched condition, and especially the unmerited sufferings of those they ought to provide for, ask it, in a manner which neither reason or the best feelings of the virtuous, can resist.

"If this, upon the whole, be a true representation of the state of things in our country, and certainly it is in many parts of it, where is reason or justice, where are equal rights or correct feelings, when the laws scarcely notice intemperance but in its last stages, and when reformation is nearly hopeless? Where are even tender feelings of the weaker sort, where is humanity with judgment, when the intemperate head of a family can, year after year, undisturbed by law, make his innocent wife and children poor, mortified and wretched? In such cases, misery seems to be made the portion of the innocent, and the guilty one does as he pleases and goes free. We not only see in every place the hard earnings of industry and of correct habits applied, by a sort of necessity, to support the intemperate, or those ruined by intemperance; but we see also life destroyed by it in numerous instances. As intemperate men lose all sense of character and of country, they become the worst sort of population in a free state. Their vice begets poverty; 'poverty enforces dependence, and dependence increases corruption.' The maxim which Homer applied to the slave, more forcibly applies to them. No other vice so much as intemperance destroys the mind." pp. 7, 8.

"A third question occurs. Can any more effectual means be adopted to check and restrain this vice? and must not these means be efficient laws, well executed, public opinion, and good examples? Certain it is, these were the means our ancestors adopted in the days of our colonies and provinces, when there was much less intemperance than there now is. One reason, also, was that public opinion, and public officers had much more influence than they now have. Perhaps they had less fear of the influence of the vicious in popular elections.

"In the best of times and among the best of men, *to prosecute*, however necessary, is always unpleasant, and usually unpopular. It is then a just sense of *duty* that must guide public officers and reflecting citizens in the right way. When it is a disagreeable business to restrain or punish the vicious, it is to be recollected they are continually punishing the virtuous, in different ways; and often those whom they are bound, on every principle, kindly to protect and support. Let good sense, sound reflexions, and just views of right and wrong, bring public officers and thinking men to the true sense of duty, in addition to friendly advice and good examples, and we may be reasonably assured this all corrupting vice will be decreased from year to year. The law must watch and check it in time, before one is settled down a *common* drunkard, or greatly endangers his health, or is on the verge of pauperism. But good laws avail but little, if no one can feel their operation till complained against by *volunteer* complainants, and such are hardly to be expected. It is much easier to enact good laws to suppress vice, than to execute them well." p. 9.

"Our ancestors deemed it wise, and perhaps we shall on further experience, to make *informing* the official and positive duty of certain

judicious and discreet persons. When men feel impelled by duty and the positive injunctions of law, they are not so fearful of being thought forward, intrusive or assuming; and they are much less obnoxious than mere *volunteer* informers. Make it a man's positive duty, by law, to act in a certain manner, and public resentment will but rarely fall on him; but if it fall any where, it will be on the law itself, an event that scarcely ever happens, for obvious reasons; one, that the law is the act of the whole people and has a solemn sanction in all respects" p. 10.

The fourth inquiry relates principally to the degree of probability which exists, that any good can probably be done by the measures employed for the suppression of the habit of intoxication. The Board appear to be sanguine in the belief, "that much has been lately done, that much is doing, and that much can be done to lessen the evils of intemperance." Though they do not believe, "that any human means can entirely suppress these evils; yet they do believe, that it is in the power of the wise and virtuous of the state or nation, very much to restrain and diminish them, and by exertions no greater than they have often made."

"No doubt this is a work of time, of patience, and of perseverance, which ever commences in true and extensive information, in correct views of the mischiefs or oppressions to be removed. Instances in proof need not be stated—they will be recollected. For several years past, every month has afforded evidence to confirm this reasoning on the subject in question, not only in the ways above stated, but many men of high standing have, within the ten last years, engaged with zeal in effecting the reformation we are attempting, thinking the importance of the cause calls for their exertions; that the pernicious evils of intemperance must be circumscribed. Hence respectable committees in New York, Philadelphia and other places have, of late years, commenced their assiduous inquiries to ascertain their true extent, and to suppress or lessen them. Some legislatures have revised their laws on the subject. A late President of the United States has more than once employed his pen on the subject, which also has lately engaged the attention of the Governour of New York, who in his speech to her legislature, urged them to pass 'some law to prevent the habitual drunkard from exhibiting in public the odious vice of drunkenness, and by its frequency rendering it less detestable, and to restrain him from wasting his property, and thereby bringing his family, for whom he is bound to provide by the strongest obligations, to want and wretchedness.' 'As auxiliary to the end,' he recommended 'that all accounts or contracts for ardent spirits, by retail, should not be recoverable by law.' Also the legislature of Vermont, a little time since, appointed a committee composed of the governour, lieutenant governour, other principal officers of the government, and respectable individuals, residing in

different parts of the state, for the purpose of suppressing intemperance. Another state has wisely forbidden justices of the peace to hold their courts in taverns. Among the able individuals, who have written to promote these important purposes, we are pleased to see one writing in the North American Review, who says, 'Nor do we think it easy to ascribe too much mischief to the growing evil of intoxication.' 'Go where you will you cannot escape the sight of this destroyer of domestic peace and public virtue.' 'It is boldly alleged as the excuse of crimes, and there is no transgression, for which the offender does not think that he has sufficiently apologized, when he says, that he was intoxicated.' The effectual remedy is a purer state of morals, generally diffused. 'A heavy tax,' says he, 'upon domestic as well as foreign spirits, is a remedy from which most is to be hoped; but unhappily it is too much opposed by considerations of private interest, and a love of popularity in rulers, to leave much expectation of its being speedily adopted.' " p. 13, 14.

One thing, at least, has been the effect of the attention which has been excited in the community to the present subject, they are less averse to adopt measures for the removal of the evil, and more convinced of the possibility of effecting something by strenuous and persevering exertion. There has been, it appears to us, a prevalent feeling that little is to be expected from human means towards the improvement of the state of morals or religion among mankind. This feeling is wearing away; we are no longer willing to sit down contented with doing nothing, because we believe nothing can be effected. We have become ready to try the experiment at least, satisfied to lose our endeavours in a good cause, if Providence does not see fit to bless them with success. The Report proceeds,

"Having considered, as far as our limits will permit, the laws and public opinion on this subject, and what has been done, is doing, and probably may and will be done on general principles, for the suppression of intemperance, one further inquiry only at present remains—that is, What further laws may be advisedly enacted, as the public mind shall be prepared, from time to time, to receive them and favour their execution?

"We believe that laws may be prudently enacted, from time to time, and with a proper regard to our state of society, to the following purposes—and that such laws will be useful and effectual for circumscribing the evils of intemperance. 1. Laws which shall diminish very much the quantity of ardent spirits, that shall be obtainable at any rate; as laws prohibiting or essentially limiting the distillation of grain, &c. 2. Laws that shall greatly raise the price of such ardent spirits as shall be obtainable or for sale; as increasing the duties on those imported, on those distilled or produced at home, and on all licenses for selling them. 3. Laws which shall very much reduce the number of such licenses. 4. Laws confining licenses to

persons of unquestionably good moral character, and who shall give ample security for conforming to the laws. 5. Laws which shall punish, as the English and Colony laws did, drunkenness as an offence *in itself* against law, when proved in such manner as shall be prescribed. 6. Laws that shall expressly make it the duty of selectmen to appoint discreet and prudent men, whose business shall be to complain of breaches of the laws against intemperance, and such other vices as shall be specified, with reasonable compensations for their services. 7. Laws which shall expressly enjoin selectmen to meet at stated periods appointed in the laws, to have the informers before them when so assembled, and to make strict inquiries if licensed persons have in all things conformed to the laws. 8. Laws which shall expressly enjoin the Courts of Sessions to limit their licences to the number clearly necessary in each town, and carefully to examine the moral character of each person licensed, and his qualifications for his employment—or perhaps, which shall even go further, and prohibit the granting of more than a certain number of licenses to a fixed number of inhabitants. 9. Laws giving guardians such power over the persons, as well as estates of their intemperate wards, as shall be necessary effectually to prevent them from obtaining the means of intoxication.

"With regard to these suggestions it may be observed, that as we only state principles whereon to frame laws, so it may be observed, that these principles are not new, but that they have been the groundwork of statutes for the suppression of vice, practised upon in many countries, ancient and modern, especially by our ancestors, and at different times and in various places in this country. In numerous cases, statute laws have forbidden grain to be distilled into ardent spirits—in other words, the bread of the people to be converted into what is, too often, their poison and their moral destroyer. So in numerous cases, statute laws have been enacted, not only for raising revenue upon ardent spirits, but also to make them scarce, in order to aid the cause of good government, morality and religion; and to benefit labouring people especially, by keeping what is too often their ruin, in a good measure out of their reach. If any still believe ardent spirits to be necessary for labouring men, or beneficial to them, let a fair comparison be made among our farmers in the same town, between those who have used little or none of them, and those who have used them freely, and it will be seen that the former have ever enjoyed more health and vigour of constitution, especially in old age, than the latter. To establish this difference we need not say more, as it has been so fully proved already by this and other societies, as well as by many medical and other writers." pp. 14—16.

Laws framed upon these principles would be admirably calculated for the purpose of reforming and restraining the intemperate; they would have all the effect which laws ever can have. In order to any beneficial and permanent influence, it appears

vitally important that the subject should be thoroughly attended to. If laws are made at all, they should be made upon a system; they should extend so as to embrace every case, and preclude every difficulty. They should form as distinct a department of public attention and legislation as the poor laws. Statutes should not be enacted, and then left to be executed by selectmen, justices, or constables, just as it may happen, without making it the duty of a particular individual. Such laws are never put in force—when any odium is attached to their execution—if the duty can be avoided by those on whom it falls. And that this is the case with regard to our laws as they exist at present, is sufficiently shown by the circumstance, that even such as they are, they in fact are not, and never can be executed, unless specific provision be made for that purpose.

We have overseers of the poor—why may we not have overseers of the intemperate? We have sheriffs, constables, and judges, whose business it is to exercise a guardianship over the public morals, and to detect and punish all crimes which are committed. The thief, the robber, the pickpocket do not often escape with impunity, for there are those whose office and interest it is to bring them to justice; and, what is very important, public opinion supports them in the performance of this duty. Why then should we not have officers whose specific business it might be to bring to justice the drunkard—a criminal of another class, it is true, but still a criminal. If it is worth while to have any laws at all, it is worth while to have good ones, and to have them well executed. Let the question be first fairly deliberated and determined, whether legal authority can interfere with any probability of success. If we conclude that it cannot, let the subject be forever dropped; let our laws, such as they are, be stricken from the statute book; for an ill-executed or insufficient law is a disgrace to the community, and far worse than none. If on the other hand, we believe that it can, let the enterprize be undertaken with spirit and zeal; it is certainly of sufficient importance to authorize an experiment of some magnitude, and at some expense. We do not know that there can be any serious objection to the scheme at which we have hinted,—the organization of a regular legal superintendance over the intemperate, carried out into detail in every part of the community. Let every man, who is known, or can be detected to be intemperate, come under the controul of a board established for this purpose; let him be deprived to a certain degree of his legal and personal rights; and let his property and the profits of his labour be under the direction of the board. Let this plan be so arranged as to exercise a constant guardianship over the community, keep a

strict watch over those who are in danger of falling into habits of intemperance, apply the remedy in the first instance, as soon as an individual becomes fairly the subject of it, and not wait with a mistaken lenity, till time has rendered him shameless and insensible to punishment. This duty should not be gratuitously performed; it ought to be made, if not the sole employment, at least a profitable one, to those who are engaged in it; the compensation ought to be sufficient to induce them to perform it faithfully. The servants of the public should always be paid, and well paid. It is ruinous to entrust the discharge of irksome, disagreeable, or unpopular offices to the public spirit of those who fill them. It is true we may find some men, who would do their duty perfectly, prompted by this motive alone; but such men are very few. And it is difficult to censure or to punish an individual for neglecting a business, for the faithful accomplishment of which he would at best get only empty thanks, and more probably would have to encounter hatred or insult.

This, it is obvious, is but a sketch of what such a system should be, if it be attempted at all; we have no hopes, except from a thorough plan, thoroughly executed. We are aware that strong opposition would exist to any thing of this nature; that it would excite the most determined resistance of probably a majority of the community; that there would be no prospect of carrying it immediately or soon into operation; that there would be serious doubts of its practicability, and that the good to be derived from it would be long in coming to light; so long, indeed, as perhaps to discourage many of those who might at first be sanguine in their expectations of success. Still we ought not to be deterred, by any such unfavourable circumstances, from ensuring to the subject a fair examination. Time may do much, we know how much it has already done, towards producing such a change in public opinion, as should tolerate a system like that which has been suggested.

Public opinion is, after all that can be said, the foundation on which we are to build our hopes of success; because if this do not support a design, it never can have a favourable issue. Temporary circumstances may induce a legislature to frame laws, which are not in consonance with the general spirit of the people; but no policy, no system, no institutions, which depend upon a legislature, can be permanently established or carried successfully into operation, if they contradict the inclinations, the prejudices, or the passions of a community at large. Now it is not politic to attempt measures of a novel nature, and carry them through by an influence which merely operates on the mind of the legislator, and does not carry conviction to his con-

stituents. This would be to ensure defeat in the end, and defeat of the worst kind, for it would have all the appearance of failure; and those consequences would be attributed to the defects of the plan itself, which were in fact owing to the injudicious zeal of its friends. It is always in the power of the people to effect the repeal of any law, or system of laws, which are obnoxious to a fair majority of them; so that if any measures are taken, and any laws enacted, before the people are prepared to receive and support them, we may be sure that defeat will necessarily ensue.

It is necessary to exercise great caution on this very delicate point of legal interference with private vices; to make sure of the support of that part of the community, the want of whose support would be fatal, before attempting any such innovations in established customs, as shall shock violently the prejudices of the mass of society. We are apt sometimes to feel as if no terms were to be held with the vicious; that it was our duty to attack them, at once, in all our strength; that a slow, deliberate, cautious policy was unworthy of the zeal we ought to manifest in the cause of virtue. Bold and decided measures ought undoubtedly to be taken; yet these are perfectly consistent with a cautious and prudent manner of carrying them into effect. We ought to be sure of every step as we advance. A plan may be bold and daring in its conception, and yet be put in operation with slowness and deliberation.

INTELLIGENCE.

Letters of a Native Christian of Madras.—We have seen two letters, written at different times by William Roberts,* a native Unitarian christian of Madras, which seem to us to afford a very interesting and encouraging example of the *Force of truth*, a few extracts from which we think will be acceptable to our readers. In the first (Dec. 25, 1816) he states,

That he is a native of the Carnatick, a descendant of Tamul or Malabar heathen parents, of very indigent circumstances, who taught him to read and write a little of his mother language. In the disturbances of Hyder Ally, in 1780, both his father and mother died, which misfortune drove him to utmost want and distress. He was soon taken and sold as a slave, in which state he

* Addressed to "the London Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the practice of virtue by the distribution of books."

lived for some years with various fortunes. He at length went to England, and while in London, he says, "with the assistance of one by the name of Butler, (an African,) I got myself baptized in St. James's church, which is between Pall-Mall and Piccadilly, on the 3d of August, 1789, and named William Roberts, being then about eighteen years old. The first thing after my baptism I bought a Common Prayer Book of the Church of England and a New Testament." He afterwards returned to Madras, as servant to George Hoar, Esq.

"Now, from the first, my chief motive for endeavouring to learn to read English was to read the Bible to my own satisfaction. I had no other books but the Bible and the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England; these were my friends, and the writers of them my instructors. As at this time I had no friends or acquaintance, being quite a stranger at Madras, I was at all times in my master's house. Whenever I had leisure the Bible was in my hands. The first thing that struck me and I stumbled at, was the Creed of St. Athanasius, in the Common Prayer Book. Three persons of the same power and attributes, each separately God and Lord, yet altogether no more than one God, was a thing too hard for me to make any thing of. The next thing was that of offering glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: in the answer to which it is said, "As it was in the beginning." Nothing of this kind is to be seen in the prayers of the greatest saints of the Scriptures which are recorded in the Bible.—These thoughts very often came across my mind, and cooled the ardour of my study. Sometimes I thought within myself that these difficulties arose from my not understanding the English language rightly; and that if I once understood the English language rightly, most probably these differences will be no more; for I had not yet then seen the Bible in my own language, translated and printed at Tranquebar by the Danish missionaries long before. I was also secretly ashamed to appear [shew] deficiency of faith in these things. The more I considered, the harder it appeared to my reasoning power; for I had not the wisdom to consider the contents of the Bible without the Common Prayer Book, and no notions of corruptions of Christianity in the reformed churches. In this state of mind I went to England again with Mr. G. H. in 1793. At this time I stayed in London about seven months and bought some books—my doubts and difficulties much the same. When I was ready to return, Mrs. Hoar's new maid-servant, a young woman by the name of Miss Raw, one evening having a small Tract in her hand, made me sit down by her work-table in the servants' room, and read several pages to me, and then left the book on the table and took to her needle.

I took that book in my hand, and was turning page after page: in the end I came to a catalogue of Dr. Priestley's and the Rev. T. Lindsey's publications. In this catalogue I found a list, called "A List of False Readings and Mistranslations of the Scripture." The moment I saw this, one after another several thoughts came across my mind, and I think I had no sleep almost all night. The next morning after my breakfast I went and bought this List from Johnson's, and read it several times. When I came to consider the contents, I was astonished to see that my doubts were not without foundation; and that the doctrine of the Trinity, at which I stumbled, was not the doctrine of the Bible. The ardour of my Bible-study returned with redoubled vigour.

"This List of the Rev. T. Lindsey's soon set me in the right road, so as to consider the Bible and the Bible only to be the rule of faith and practice. I also bought at that time the Rev. T. Lindsey's Reformed Prayer Book, and a few other Tracts of his and Dr. Priestley's. Mr. John Raw, brother to Miss Raw, also made me a present of a Tract (Dr. Priestley's Appeal to the serious and candid Professors of Christianity.) With this acquisition, and full of joy on my new discovery, I returned to Madras in 1794.

"Soon after my return I was hired as a butler in Mr. W. Harrington's family, at eight pagodas per month, in which family I am continuing still (December 1816.) After I came into the service of Mr. Harrington and got [a] little settled, I sent to Tranquebar and purchased the Bible in my own language. This Tamul Bible, with the English one, became a great help, and explained many difficulties.—To some of my countrymen who were of the Protestant and Roman Catholic persuasion, the doctrine of One God, &c. appeared as heathenism refined. Others saw and still do see it in [a] different light; but to me they became the greatest comfort and continual rejoicing: the more I read the Scripture, [the] stronger the proof appeared. I have also procured some books of the Trinitarians, and found their way of stating the Scripture doctrine to me altogether unsatisfactory."

"Though my poverty and mean situation in life: and also my disqualification and incapability to teach, be two great impediments; yet as far as lay in my power I always made a point of answering, and instructing, and giving all the information I was master of to all those of my countrymen who would.

"Among those who have been my hearers, about ten families and some individuals have embraced the Unitarian faith; seven out of the ten families are original converts from Heathenism. All of them are poor, their situation in life is much meaner than

my own. Among them, the first of my converts and the oldest man, Meguel Annathy, is about seventy-five years of age, at present very sickly; he was originally a convert to the Roman Catholic persuasion from Heathenism, and twenty years since he has embraced the doctrine of the Unitarians. He is alike a father and elder to our little society, and maintains himself and his family by keeping a Tamul school for our children.

"For our use I have drawn a set [of] forms of prayers and other offices in our own language (Tamul or Malabar), as well as I could, like that of the Rev. T. Lindsey's Reformed Prayer Book.

"We have a burying-ground of our own, and a small place of worship opened on the 19th December 1813. Those of us that can conveniently go, meet there for divine worship; and if I am there present, which happens about once in two or three Sundays, I read the Prayers and some portions of Scripture, and sometimes after prayer explain some parts of Scripture. In my absence my old friend Meguel Annathy does the same. Here we baptize, administer the Lord's supper, give marriage, and bury our dead."

"Some Europeans as well as natives have interrogated us concerning our faith; and others did and still do upbraid us for being singular and conceited, as they imagine, in our way of thinking; and also for not joining any other societies of Christians; yet no body has disturbed us on account of our religion.

"Our Prayer Books and other religious tracts written by me in Tamul (for I have no head or hand in English, as it will appear plain from these lines.) in which language only I can do any thing of the kind. are in hand-writing; we have no means of printing them. We can buy the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments from the missionary societies; and of late we are blessed with sufficient number of New Testaments from the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society. One of the agents of the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society in Madras is the Rev. Marmaduke Thomson, to whom we are very well known by the name of the Congregation of Native Christians of Pursewaukum. Pursewaukum is the place where we have our small chapel."

The second Letter, (June 17, 1818,) is in reply to one addressed to him in answer to the first, and inclosed in a small parcel of books which were sent, soon after his letter was received, and before it had been officially noticed by the Society; who afterwards directed their Secretary to write to him, and to send him a much larger parcel of books.

"I have received the parcel of your benefaction, with your very kind and very affectionate letter dated 14th July, 1817, on

the 9th of April this year." "On opening your letter, reading, and seeing the books, and finding myself and my brethren are become known to you and to your respectable society, and further encouragement is promised, I became inspired with a new life, and joy inexpressible. May God our heavenly Father, Jehovah the Holy One of Israel, increase this my joy, and give me and my brethren grace before you and your respectable society!"

"I am sorry to add that my old friend Meguel Annathy did not live to see your letter and the books; he died four months after I wrote to your respectable society, being near 76 years of age.

"Since his death our school is not yet properly settled. At present a Trinitarian Christian of Trinquabar [Tranquebar] keeps the school for our children, agreeable to our rules and regulations." "He is now, at his leisure, reading and copying my books, for which copying I pay him separately. He plainly sees and confesses that the doctrine of the Trinity and the other articles that support it,—such as Original Sin, Election, Atonement for Sin by Jesus Christ, &c.—are not the doctrines of the Bible: indeed, these will be seen more at large, if some of my writings were published and set in circulation.

"Since the death of my old friend Annathy we have no regular person to do the chapel duty on Sundays in my absence: one of the oldest members present reads the prayers, and another reads the portions of Scripture appointed for the day. If there be any christening or any other duty, they generally wait for me.

"I have made an inquiry about having our prayer-book and some other tracts printed. Mr. William Urquhart, agent of the Madras Courier and proprietor of the commercial presses, says that the prayer-book, which will contain about 300 pages in octavo, the printing charges only (without the paper and binding) will cost 168 pagodas for one hundred copies; 335 pagodas for five hundred copies; but before it can be printed leave of the government must be obtained. If our prayer-book, and a few other tracts written by me, were printed, and means added to give a suitable maintenance for a few regular teachers, we shall soon be able to find young persons to accept the business, and that will increase our numbers. Helps of books, and little small pecuniary assistance towards those who are grown old and unable to work for their livelihood, is very necessary. If we set out with such means, I have no doubt but that the doctrine of One God and his unbought pardon, with eternal bliss and everlasting life to [the] returning sinner, preached by his holy servant and universal teacher (Matthew xxii. 8, 10; Acts xvii. 31,) Jesus of Nazareth, will be readily accepted by my countrymen.

But should God Almighty, the proprietor of heaven and earth, the supreme ruler of all things, who sees what is proper for man, move the hearts of the English Unitarians in our favour, and send out missionaries to this country, a regular foundation will be laid for instructing my countrymen. At present things are very feeble: as matters stand now, should the most high God think it proper to put an end to my existence, I do not see who will take the trouble, and be at little expense, and forego some pleasures, so as to be a leader of my poor brethren. I often say in my prayer in the words of Esau, 'Hast thou but one blessing, my Father?' The Trinitarians (both white and black) teachers and disciples persuade themselves that when William Roberts dies, the name of Unitarians will cease here: This perhaps is also their secret prayer. There is not one European or European descendant among us,—not one rich man,—not one learned man,—even not one that can read English well: this disadvantage does not discourage me at all; I am convinced that the God of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures is the true and living God, and am also fully persuaded that Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and the Jewish and first Christian churches, were Unitarians. To this truth I wish to bear my testimony among my countrymen as far as it lay in my power. If this be done, I leave the issue to Him whose truth I espouse."

Congregational Church in the City of New York.—A Congregational Society has been formed and incorporated in the city of New York, on the broad and liberal principles of the congregations in this vicinity. Many of the ministers of this town and neighbourhood, who have been for years excluded from all the pulpits of New York, have accepted the invitations of this young society, and for a year past have performed the services of their religious worship in a commodious chapel, which has been fitted up for their temporary accommodation. They are now erecting a handsome church in the centre of the city, which will probably be completed by the month of November. The corner-stone was laid with appropriate religious solemnities on the 29th of April last. The following is the Address, made upon the occasion:—

"Christian Friends,

"We have assembled upon an occasion of no small interest. The erection of a new Temple to the honour of Almighty God demands of us the religious acknowledgment of his providence, and earnest supplications for his blessing. 'Except the Lord build the House, they labour in vain that build it.' Confident,

therefore, in the uprightness and purity of our intentions; humbly trusting that we sincerely seek his glory in the promotion of that blessed religion, which he has so mercifully sent to guide us to eternal salvation; we have come now, under the open eye of Heaven, to consecrate to Him the beginning of our labours, and to ask of Him their prosperous completion. To Him we submit the judgment of our spirits; and, conscious as we are, that 'the way in which we worship the God of our fathers is by many called heresy,' and 'every where spoken against;' it is our consolation and joy to be permitted to appeal to Him, and to believe that He, who looketh not on the *outward appearance*, but on *the heart*, will approve our purpose, and graciously accept our humble offering. It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment; he who judgeth us is the Lord.

"As, therefore, the tribe of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh,—who, when they had built an altar for themselves on the other side of Jordan, were accused by their brethren of revolting from the true worship of God,—answered in that bold appeal and said: "The Lord, God of Gods—the Lord, God of Gods, he knoweth, and all Israel shall know, if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, that we have built us an altar"*—so, Christian friends, if any of our brethren should imagine that this our altar is erecting in opposition to the truth, or the influence of our common Christianity, let us make the same appeal; not doubting that they will receive it with the same ready candour. For although we have been led by the dictates of our conscience and our honest understanding of the scriptures of truth, to withdraw from their temples, it is *not* in the spirit of rebellion or hostility; though we are about erecting another altar, it is not on the other side of Jordan, and need not destroy their confidence or friendship. We place ourselves under the broad banner of those protestant principles, which are the present glory of Christendom. We claim, and in this land the claim will not be denied us, to have our rights of conscience respected, and to be left accountable to God only; and we trust that we are ready freely and fully to extend to others the invaluable privilege so dear to ourselves.

"It is true that we differ in some points, and, as we conceive, in some important points of religious faith, from many of the disciples of our common Lord. The Church has in every age had divisions. It is not strange that finite minds should vary in their judgments respecting infinite things. While we see darkly, it is to be expected that we should see differently; and this dif-

* Joshua xxii. 22.

ference cannot be sinful, unless it overthrow the foundations of holiness and piety, or occasion the destruction of the spirit of the gospel. It is they who have *not the spirit* of Christ, that are none of his. While, therefore, our allegiance to conscience, to truth, and to God, compels us to rear these walls of separate worship, we have unspeakable joy in the belief, that the great body of Christians are serving the same universal sovereign—pursuing the same holy end; and that, when we shall leave this abode of imperfect knowledge for that blessed state in which imperfection shall be done away, then, all seeing as they are seen, and knowing as they are known, shall unite in one worship in the one Temple of which God himself shall be the light and glory. In that day, when, according to our ascended Saviour's prediction, "all shall be one, even as he and the Father are one;" in that day, it shall be our happiness to understand alike the nature of that union of the Blessed Jesus with our Heavenly Father, concerning which we are now at variance. It is with such feelings and anticipations that we proceed to lay the corner-stone of our religious edifice."

This address was followed by a prayer. The corner-stone was then laid with a solemn invocation, and the following inscription deposited.

This is Life Eternal—to know THEE, the only TRUE GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.

THIS CORNER-STONE

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIGNAL CHURCH OF NEW YORK.

DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF THE ONLY GOD,

THROUGH THE ONLY MEDIATOR,

Founded upon the great principles of the *Reformation*—the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the right of private judgment and liberty of conscience;

WAS LAID,

With earnest prayer for the acceptance and blessing of God,

On Saturday, the 29th of April, 1820.

Call no man master upon earth, for one is your master, even *Christ*, and all ye are Brethren.

In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee.

The members of this infant establishment deserve great credit for their pure and disinterested zeal in the cause of christian truth and liberty, and should receive the encouragement and prayers of all lovers of true religion.

The Massachusetts Bible Society held their annual meeting on the 8th of June, and have published the following REPORT :—

"The Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Bible Society respectfully report, that they have distributed the following Bibles and Testaments in the course of the past year, viz.

180 Large Bibles.
1439 Small do.
1934 Testaments.

3553 Total.

"The demands on our Society have been so numerous as to absorb our annual income, so that no surplus fund can be remitted to the American Bible Society. We owe, however, to that society an important benefit, which we anticipated from its institution; that is, the power of furnishing Bibles in a fair and handsome type, and in durable binding, at a moderate expense. The very poorest now read the Scriptures in better editions than were formerly used by the great body of the people.

"During the last year, the Trustees have been solicitous to establish regulations for preventing the abuses and impositions to which our Institution is liable, and they believe that such checks have been devised, as will, in a great measure, confine this charity to its proper objects. An important improvement, however, remains to be made. The experience of the last year has shown, that many, who cannot pay the full price of a Bible, may be induced to pay in proportion to their ability; and the distributors of our books are earnestly requested to invite and encourage this just and honourable effort among their poor brethren. In this way, our means of usefulness will be enlarged, and the Scriptures will be prized, preserved and read more faithfully, than when received wholly as a charity. In England, the poor are encouraged to supply their own wants, and some of them pay for a Bible by small weekly appropriations from their earnings; and thus the British and Foreign Bible Society accumulates resources for its immense operations abroad.

"Your Committee are happy to state, that the uncommon zeal, which has been manifested for the last fifteen years in this good cause, gives no signs of weariness or exhaustion. Indeed, Christians cannot draw back from a work, the success of which

has been so sudden, wide, and unparalleled. To those who have not consulted the reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the extent and zeal of the co-operation now existing and continually spreading in this benevolent and Christian enterprize, cannot easily be conceived. That this remarkable union of effort in Europe may have been aided by human policy, we admit; but it is too spontaneous, sincere and ardent, to be ascribed to that as its main cause; and it ought to be regarded as a proof that, amidst the corruptions of Christendom, a strong attachment to Christianity, much stronger than we had anticipated, is rooted in men's minds. The multiplication of Bible Societies in France, although their number and efforts bear little proportion to the resources and wants of that kingdom, is one of the promising events of the past year. In Russia, the Word of God 'has free course and is glorified' to an extent truly astonishing; Bible Societies being spread over that immense empire even to Siberia. Similar institutions have also been planted in Greece. The Rev. Dr. Pinkerton, the indefatigable missionary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, writes, 'I have news to communicate, which will fill your hearts with joy. *Athens also is become the seat of a Bible Society.*'

"The duty of giving to the poor, and of spreading through the world, a divine revelation, which we believe to have been intended for the whole human race, is so plain and urgent, that we wonder that its obligation was not formerly more understood and felt. We should be grateful, that we live in an age, which, instead of sheltering itself under the example of past times, is labouring to repair their deficiencies, and which is distinguished by an earnest and enlarged philanthropy. To be inactive at such a period, when so good a spirit is circulating round us, when benevolent plans, which would once have been scoffed at for their wildness, are prosecuted with fervour and success, would expose us to just reproach. Every sincere and enlightened Christian considers the religion of his Master as the most important interest on earth, and he cannot, in such an age as this, withhold his prayers and efforts for its success."

The American Bible Society held its annual meeting in New York on the 11th of May. We shall notice its report at some future time.

The Evangelical Missionary Society of Massachusetts held their semi-annual meeting in the first parish of Dorchester on the 7th of June. The discourse was delivered by Rev. H. Ware of Boston, from Galatians vi. 10. It has been published. A collec-

tion was taken in aid of the objects of the Society, amounting to $95 23.

The Treasurer of the Society acknowledges the receipt of the following sums from churches and individuals, since the last annual meeting, October 5, 1819.

1819.

Hon. Benjamin Pickman, Salem, amount of two donations	$ 50	
Ladies of West-Church, Boston, through Rev. C. Lowell, accidentally omitted in last account,	58	
Contribution after the annual discourse, Oct. 7, in First Church, Chauncey-Place,	46	53

1820.

From Ladies in Brookline, through their pastor, Rev. John Pierce,	30	28
From a Lady in West Church, through Rev. C. Lowell,	10	
Contribution in Second Church, through Rev. Henry Ware,	43	
From a Lady of New-North Church, through the Rev. F. Parkman,	10	
Female Cent Society, in East-Parish, Bridgewater, through Rev. J. Flint,	12	62
From a Lady in Roxbury, through Rev. Dr. Porter,	5	
From Ladies of the West Church, Boston, through Rev. C. Lowell,	106	
From contribution after semi-annual discourse, June 7, in Rev. Dr. Harris' Church, Dorchester,	95	23
From a Parishoner, through Rev. F. Parkman,	10	
From a Parishoner, through Rev. W. E. Channing,	20	
First dividend, received on eight shares in stock of Marine Insurance Company, bequeathed to the Society by the late Miss Sarah Russell, of Charlestown,	48	

In these accounts *annual* and *life* subscriptions are not included. Other churches have made or are making collections, the amount of which, not being yet ascertained, will be given in a future number. We are very happy in noticing the increased attention and patronage, which appear to be excited to this interesting and useful Institution.

The Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts, met in the new Court House, on Wednesday May 31, 5 o'clock P.M. Rev. Dr. Bancroft, moderator, opened the meeting with prayer. Rev. J. Pierce, who had been chosen scribe for ten years successively, was re-elected, but declined, and the Rev. J. Codman was chosen. Rev. F. Parkman was re-chosen treasurer. Rev. Dr. Worcester, of Salem, was chosen second preacher. The Convention attended to the usual business of the meeting, which was continued by adjournment through Thursday morning. At 12 o'clock they assembled for worship in the church in Brattle Square, when the annual discourse was delivered by Rev. Dr. Bancroft of Worcester, from Phil. i. 17.. *I am set for the defence of*

the gospel. The collection which was made for the widows and orphans of deceased ministers amounted to $406 00. The members of the Convention partook of a dinner, provided at the expense of the Congregational Churches in Boston. The Sermon has been printed.

Meeting of the Liberal Clergy.—Agreeably to arrangements previously made, a large number of the ministers of the Commonwealth who are denominated liberal, met together on the evening preceding Election, at the vestry of the church in Federal Street. The Rev. James Flint, of Bridgewater, led the devotions of the evening, and the Rev. W. E. Channing delivered an address on the objects of the meeting. We expect to be able to lay this address before our readers in the next number of the Disciple. The meeting was adjourned to the next evening, when much interesting and profitable conversation was had on the state and prospects of religion. A similar meeting was appointed for the next year to be holden at the same place on the morning of election day, at eight o'clock.

The following articles state the objects and rules of the meeting.

At a Meeting of Ministers from different parts of the Commonwealth, May 31, 1820, *the following rules were adopted* :—

1. There shall be an annual meeting in election week for mutual improvement in pastoral duty, and for the promotion of Christian truth and holiness.

2. At each annual meeting a moderator and scribe shall be chosen by nomination.

3. One of the brethren shall offer a prayer, and another deliver an address suited to the objects of the meeting; it being understood, that these services shall be short, so as to leave time for the other exercises.

4. Each brother shall be requested to report the state and prospects of religion in his vicinity, and to suggest any measures for promoting truth and practical piety, which the circumstances of the times may seem to require, or which his own experience or observation may have led him to approve.

5. Any brother shall be authorized to propose for discussion any plan for advancing ministerial usefulness, for uniting our efforts in the common cause, and in general for spreading the knowledge and spirit of Christianity.

6. At each meeting a committee of three shall be appointed to select the persons who shall officiate at the next meeting, to assign the subject for the address, to use such means as they

shall deem expedient for ensuring a general attendance, and to report such measures as shall appear to them fitted to increase the usefulness of the meeting.

The Moderator and Scribe shall, ex officio, be members of this Committee.

The annual meeting of various Religious Societies was holden during Election week, which we have not room to notice particularly.

St. Paul's Church, lately erected in this town, was on Friday, consecrated to the service and worship of GOD, according to the forms prescribed by the canons of the Episcopal Church. The religious services were performed by the Rev. Bishop GRISWOLD, and the Rev. Dr. GARDINER, and the sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. JARVIS, Pastor elect of the Society.

We have just received a copy of "Letters on the ministry, ritual, and doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church, addressed to the Rev. Wm. E. Wyatt, D D. Associate Minister of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore, and Professor of Theology in the University of Maryland, in reply to a sermon exhibiting some of the principal doctrines of the protestant episcopal church in the United States,—by Jared Sparks, A.M. minister of the first independent church of Baltimore." The first letter is employed in combating the assumption (which it appears is still maintained in Baltimore) of the divine or apostolic institution of episcopal orders,—the second is on the church ritual,—the third on the asserted authority of the church in controversies of faith,—the fourth on the Calvinistic import of the articles,—and the fifth and sixth on the doctrine of the trinity. We are much gratified to announce such a work from such a hand. Mr. Sparks is in a situation to see Episcopacy, countenanced and emboldened by the yet more extravagant pretensions of the Romish Church, appearing in its least modest form; and for this, among other reasons, we look forward with much interest to the perusal of a volume which shall contain the observations of a scholar on a mistaken portion of ecclesiastical history, and the views which one, who can estimate the worth of religious liberty, has taken of a system, whose yoke our fathers of New England crossed the ocean, and planted a desert to shake off. A notice of it may be expected in our next number.

We perceive by a notice in the Allgemeines Repertorium (General Repertory) No. 18, Leipsick, 1819, that the History of the Jews by Miss H. Adams been translated into German from the London edition. After some account of the work, the author of the notice observes, that the translator has undertaken a useful labour, as there is no similar work in German proper for general use. He at the same time praises this valuable history for its simple, inartificial and unprejudiced style of narration.

The late Thomas Cary, Esq. of Newburyport, has bequeathed to the Theological Institution at Cambridge, a large property, supposed to amount to *ten* or *fifteen thousand dollars*.

Moses Brown, Esq. late of Beverly, has made a bequest to the same Institution of *two thousand dollars*.

CHRISTIAN TRACTS *Published by* WELLS & LILLY.

No. 1. William's Return, or Good News for Cottagers: by Mary Hughes. Price single, 17 cents, per dozen 1 *doll.* 62 *cts.*, per hundred 10 *dolls.*

No. 2. Village Dialogues. Parts 1 and 2. 12 1-2 cents single.—1 *doll.* 12 1-2 per dozen.—8 *dolls.* per 100.

No. 3. Village Dialogues. Part 3. 12 1-2 cents do. do. do.

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No. 7. A Week in a Cottage. 12 1-2 cents do. do. do.

No. 8. The History of Edward Allen, the patient man. Price 17 cts. single.—1 *doll.* 62 per dozen.—10 *dolls.* per 100.

No. 9. The Widow. Price 12 1-2 cents.

No 10. The History of Eleanor Williams. Price 20 cents.—1 *doll.* 80 per dozen.—12 *dolls.* 50 per 100.

They have collected 25 copies of the following valuable Tracts; which may be had together in neat boards, at the very low price of *two dollars fifty cents.*

1. View of the Constitution and Associate Statutes of the Theological Seminary in Andover; from the Monthly Anthology of Nov. 1808.
2. "The Unity of God," a Sermon. By Rev. S. Thacher.
3. Channing's Letter to Thacher.
4. ——— Remarks on Dr. Worcester's Letter.
5. ——— Remarks on Worcester's Second Letter.
6. Review of the Improved Version, and of Griesbach's New Testament from the Eclectic Review.
7. Dr. Ware's Sermon before the Convention, 1818.
8. Price's Five Sermons on the Christian Doctrine.
9. Theological Tracts, No. 1. containing *Zollikoffer's Seven Sermons* on the Reformation.
10. Theological Tracts, No. 2. *Bell on the Lord's Supper, complete,* with the Appendix and all the Notes.
11. Theological Tracts, No. 3. *Bishop Hare* on the Difficulties and Discouragements which attend the Study of the Scriptures.
12. Foster's, James, Essay on Fundamentals, with a particular Regard to the Doctrine of the Trinity.
13. An Inquiry into the Right to Change the ECCLESIASTICAL CONSTITUTION of the *Congregational Churches of Massachusetts,* &c. &c.
14. Review of Professor Stuart's Letters to Mr. Channing; from the Christian Disciple.
15. Statement of Reasons for not believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians, &c. occasioned by Professor Stuart's Letters; from the Christian Disciple.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND READERS.

We presume that the motto prefixed to JOHN's paper was intended as a hint to ourselves, and not for the edification of the public.

An *Essay on the Communion* came too late for insertion in the present number.

Several other favours have been received, to which we shall pay more particular attention hereafter.

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

NEW SERIES—No. 10.

For July and August, 1820.

HERDER, AND HIS LETTERS RELATING TO THE STUDY OF DIVINITY.

Herder, though one of the most celebrated writers of the last part of the last century in Germany, has been very little known abroad. The chief cause of this probably is, that all his writings are composed in his own tongue; and the language and literature of the Germans have not till lately been much attended to by foreigners. It is a singular fact, that while scarcely a work of note, either in letters or the sciences, appears in English, without soon issuing in translation from the German press; our own language has been put in possession of little in return, except a few strange plays and extravagant fictions. The prejudices, which those loose writings had a great part in creating, are however wearing away fast; and men are beginning to believe that there is not a science in the whole circle, which does not owe great obligations to German genius and research. Another reason why Herder's name is no better known among us, is found in the character of his writings. Many of them are on abstract subjects; and many relate to the national literature, which he did more than any one else perhaps to redeem from the French criticism; and many are poetical, and cannot therefore well be translated. He was distinguished as a philosopher, a poet, and an interpreter of the scriptures; by the originality of his conceptions, the vigour of his judgment, the charms of his style, and especially by a quick sensibility to whatever is elevated, beautiful, and tender. *In point of religious sentiment, he belonged to the school which is called orthodox.* The "Ode to the Hebrew Prophets," of which we attempted a translation in a late

number, and which we gave as Eichhorn's, was in fact, as we have since been informed, written by Herder; and was merely prefixed, by that professor, as a sort of motto, to his last celebrated work.

In 1780, he published "Letters relating to the Study of Divinity," which soon came to a second edition, and were much read. We subjoin a translation of the first of these; intending, though without meaning to pledge ourselves, to translate the rest of the series of twelve; which are all that treat particularly of the Old Testament.

LETTER I.

That in reading the Bible we must regard it as human; as a *book of human composition and language*

It must be evident to you, my young friend, that the best way to study theology, is to study the Bible; and the best way of reading this divine book is to regard it as *human*. I use this word in its widest extent and strictest meaning.

The Bible must be read thus, because it is a book written by men for the use of men. The language is human; the means by which it has been written and preserved are human; human, in short, are the faculties by which it is to be comprehended; the helps, by which it is to be illustrated; and all the ends and uses, to which it is to be applied. You may safely believe, that the more you read the word of God in this manner, the nearer you will approach to the object of its Designer, who made man in his own image, and who, in all the works and benefits whereby he reveals himself as God, adapts himself to human conceptions.

Do not think this a common place remark. The consequences of the principle now stated, if rightly understood and carried out in their whole extent, are important. In the first place, many a superstition is shut out by it, as if the Bible, in every trifling particular of its writing materials, parchment or paper, style or pen, even to every stroke or character, which the transcribers of it have drawn, were superhuman and unearthly; as if, of course,—singularly and without parallel,—it has been exposed neither to fraud nor mistake; and is to be worshipped, not examined or tested. A bad principle indeed; which would only make those, who cherish such fond ideas of inspiration, idle and stupid; first tying a bandage over their eyes, and then asking if they see no light. Does a man, who transcribes the Bible, become immediately

an infallible divinity? You will soon see, if you will examine the transcriber. He writes now as he has always written; that is, as he happens to have accuracy, diligence, knowledge of the language and facts, leisure, patience, and a legible hand. None of all these circumstances will be altered by a miracle, because it is the Bible that he is copying. These remarks will of course be understood to apply only to those ages, that preceded the invention of printing. No parchment becomes of a firmer texture, because the scriptures are inscribed upon it; and no ink is made on that account indelible. Hebrew points and letters do not cast off their nature, because used in the book of books; and all the influences, that time exerts upon language, must still act in their full and natural course. These are not conjectures, but facts: and so are all the conclusions connected with them. Banish all remains of the leaven of that opinion, which supposes this book to be, in its condition and materials, no book, as others are; as if, for example, no various readings are to be found in it, because it is inspired. Various readings actually occur in it, and only one reading can be the right one: this is a matter of positive evidence, and not of speculation. Of course, we must examine them with care; we must distinguish and choose between different readings; and here the same knowledge and skill are requisite, that must be brought to all other human books. Indeed, the Bible stands more in need of these than any other book, because it is about the most ancient, as to the greatest part, and the first foundations of it. Through how many hands, how many nations and ages, has it been transmitted! and yet Providence, as we shall presently see, has taken care to preserve it through natural means, in a manner beyond example; and we may be fully satisfied of its authenticity, in its whole scope and contents, so far as they are of importance to us: yet we are not to infer these things *a priori:* as if the Bible were written in heaven, and not on earth; by angels and not by men. By such suppositions we do not honour, but disgrace and injure it. Great part of the most impudent objections that have been brought against it, have been taken from this air-built armoury; and many a champion fights still on the same ground, as if he were contending for the Koran of Mohammed, and some Gabriel who brought it from heaven. I cannot enlist on this side; not because the enemy is formidable, but because the field of battle is in fairy land. By a young theologian, such a hypothesis, unsupported certainly, and for the most part palpably false and visionary, would be very disgracefully assumed. It obstructs his sight, and stunts his judgment: it prevents him from inquiring.

from collecting, from examining, from illustrating on sound principles; and cramps what he may possess of those good gifts of heaven, intelligence and penetration. Many have plainly professed, I cannot read a book, which is no book like others; and some, after great labour and pains, have sunk at last into the same oppressive indolence. Luther, who had a clear and excellent genius, was embarrassed by no foolish notions of this sort; and I am well persuaded that no intelligent mind will ever consent to be so. At least I have witnessed in more than one instance, how hard it is to bring a person to right understanding and rational views in the use of the Bible, who has once in him such a pestilent quagmire of absurdity. He perpetually imagines, when he takes up the Bible, that he is holding what is not a book; and does not allow himself to see what he sees, nor to hear what he hears. Heavenly shadows are flitting before him; —forms from the realms of the Peris and Neris; and how often against all truth, utility and consistency! The worst of this is, he learns to despise or neglect, in the commencement of his studies, those external aids, the want of which will cleave to him forever afterwards; and, like other deficiencies, which seldom show all their bad consequences at first, will probably prejudice him at length against the aids of which he actually avails himself. He does not know perhaps the first principles of those helps, and so much the worse. He is contending, as he supposes, for the things of God and the scriptures, while he is in reality fighting for his own poverty against the true means and sources of knowledge,—for the cataract upon his eyes.

Do not despise, my young friend, the knowledge which is intended to prepare you for such a use of the Bible as has now been recommended. What that use is, must be left to your riper years more perfectly to understand and experience. Do not suffer yourself to be deterred by the common misuse, the often downright impious application, of what is called biblical criticism: but study languages, kindred languages; make yourself familiar with the rudiments of this delicate and philosophical and learned department:—collect whatever you are able to collect, even if it should have but a remote reference to your immediate object. Have early in your hands an interleaved copy of the Bible in its original tongues; in which you may note variations, objections, conjectures, remarks, rules for future use and judgment. But do not form decisions yet: you are at present too young: perhaps the study itself, especially of the Old Testament, is too young, to permit thoroughly matured and final decisions. Ten or twenty years hence, you and all of us will be in a very different part of the course from that in which we are now engag-

ed. We shall have thrown down many a critical scaffolding, because the wall will be completed; we shall receive many things as sure, which now seem uncertain to us; and shall not find ourselves the worse for the change. At present, be like the bees, who collect their honey from every flower; but let it be honey which you collect, not poison, not refuse. Cherish always the childlike simplicity of your veneration for the Bible, though you may sometimes see it profaned by the hands of its critics: criticism has no share in this injury except accidentally. The language-master and the interpreter are two very different beings; as we may see by so many fluent teachers of new idioms. These men may have a perfect acquaintance with the language, and yet know nothing at all of the author: to them a veil hangs before his plainest meaning;—to say nothing of his less common and obvious beauties of thought. So it is always likely to be with the mere language-master of the Bible, because it is the oldest, and the most comprehensive of books:—for this very reason however, he appears to be a useful and even indispensable thing,—purblindness excepted;—and in grammar and the minutiæ of criticism even that may serve some good end.—In short, my friend, do not neglect the appurtenances and the scaffolding of theology; but remember that the appurtenances are not the thing itself, and the scaffolding is not the building. This will preserve you both from the pride of criticism, that has frozen up many a good mind; and from uncritical looseness and extravagance.

P. S. Verbal instruction is the most proper, in language, and the first elements of criticism. I do not, therefore, perplex you yet with any list of books. Richard Simon is the father of the criticism both of the Old and New Testament in modern times; but it is too soon for you, as yet, to read him. A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, such as it ought to be, has not yet appeared.* Use Walton's Prolegomena,† and Wahner's "Antiquitates Hebræorum;"‡ both rich and useful books for beginners: but better still, attend to what your instructers will deliver to you on both collections of the sacred books. They will have used whatever was worth using, that is to be found in the catalogues; and the rudiments of every science are best learned by oral communication and practice.

* We have it now in Eichhorn's valuable Introduction to the Old Testament.

† Briani Waltoni Apparat. Biblic. 1673, folio. Dathe's Edit. Leip. 1777-8.

‡ Gotting. 1743, 2 vols. 8vo.

VIRTUE, AS CONNECTED WITH CIVIL LIBERTY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

Virtue is said to be the principle of popular governments. It may, and unquestionably does exist, in a greater or less degree, in every form and state of society; but, in a political view, there is not that demand for it in most other countries, which there is in this. It is not necessary to the action or support of a despotic government. The strong arm of absolute authority requires, on the part of the subjects, the cooperation of no higher principles, than servile fear and passive obedience. These degrading and unresisting qualities produce that abject submission of the people to the uncontrolled will of a master, in which despotism consists.

Popular governments, on the contrary, cannot flourish, or even exist long, without virtue. It is their sustenance, their life-blood. In a community, like ours, every thing depends on the tone of public morals. The reason is obvious,—*the people are the sovereign;* their will, their passions, their caprices direct the movements of the system, and determine its condition. The more the *people*, therefore, are accustomed to regulate their minds, to repress all selfish and corrupting propensities, to listen to the voice of conscience, to pay a due regard to merit in the distribution of offices, to love their country, to respect the laws, to cherish the interests of learning and religion, to delight in and labour to promote the order and welfare of the community; the more they have, in short, the dispositions and habits, which reason and our religion enjoin; the more benign and salutary the operation of our political institutions will evidently be, and the greater their stability.

The first and great requisite, then, in the citizens of a free state, is that they be virtuous. And to describe all our duties in this relation, would be to write a complete treatise of ethics. Whatever improves one's character as a *man*, renders him also a better *citizen*. Whatever elevates a *freeman* in the scale of moral worth, contributes to the health and vigour and preservation of his government;—a government, which, in its turn, exerts a favourable influence upon the character of the people, in proportion as it is administered agreeably to its genius and spirit. For if by a reaction of the effect upon the cause, the tendency of arbitrary power is, as all history testifies, to corrupt its subjects: the reign of law and justice, which is the perfection of civil liber-

ty, acts, on the contrary, not less in unison with the best principles of human nature,—with our moral sentiments, with reason and conscience. It is to the soul of man, its faculties and affections, what congeniality of soil and climate is to vegetable nature. In this happy disposition of things, virtue finds those genial influences, which are most propitious to its life and growth.

What can be more demonstrative of the superiority of a *free*, over an *arbitrary* government? In the latter system (if system it may be called) virtue has no place allotted to it; in the former it is the one thing needful, the great animating and sustaining principle. It would be absurd to tell the slaves of despotism, that patriotism and public spirit, or even the private and personal virtues, are necessary to the maintenance of their master's authority. He wants no such aid. The noble and generous principles of our nature are regarded by him with an eye of jealousy; they are hostile, and therefore odious, to the tyrant; his strength is the corruption and degradation of his subjects. A republic, on the contrary, from its very frame and texture, supposes the existence of virtue in the people. It is its proper and natural element. There must be some virtue, or liberty soon ceases to breathe. And the more sparingly vice is permitted to mingle its impurities, the fewer and milder will be the disorders incident to the body politic.

While a free people enjoys the *exclusive privilege*, if I may so speak, of *public* virtue; every virtue of every individual has some connexion with the good of the state. Temperance is favourable to that state of mind and body, which is necessary to the knowledge and discharge of his various duties. Industry, frugality and economy place him in circumstances to act with independence in bestowing his suffrages. Patience enables, and prudence disposes him, to bear quietly and cheerfully those public burthens, which are unavoidable under every form of government; while fortitude, courage, and patriotism qualify and impel him, to defend the laws, the rights, and the liberties of his country.

The importance of virtue in a republic will be quite as apparent, if we advert to the *source* of human actions and habits,—the dispositions and affections of the heart. A good man regulates his conduct by the laws of his Creator; he acts from a sense of duty, from a regard to reason and conscience, from a love to God and his fellow creatures. If other considerations have their influence, they hold a place entirely subordinate, and are suffered to act only as auxiliaries. Now, what may we expect, in relation to the public, from a man, who is thus governed and actuated? We may expect, in the first place, that, being superiour

to the baneful influences of envy, jealousy, avarice and ambition, he will enter into no conspiracies against the liberties of his country, or cabals to disturb its tranquillity; that he will refrain from detraction and calumny to ruin the characters of political rivals; that he will form no projects, employ no means, take advantage of no situation, to enrich or aggrandize himself or his connexions, at the expense of the public. He will not engage in public affairs with the views and feelings of a *gamester*, selfishly regarding the distinctions and emoluments of office as *stakes*, to be won by artifice and fraud. Far different will be his sentiments respecting the great interests of society; far different his practice; and if he is ever honoured with the confidence of his countrymen, it will not be, because he has *not* deserved it.

We may expect, in the next place, that he will endeavour to understand and discharge all the positive duties he owes the state. Sensible of his importance in a country, where the aggregate will of the community, not the good pleasure of an individual, directs, he will bestow a due share of his thoughts and cares on the concerns of the public. He will bow to the majesty of the laws; and will labour by his example and influence to procure for them and their depositaries that general *respect*, which may supply the place of *terrour* in absolute governments. Whatever contributes to the security and order, to the prosperity and honour of the community, will have his heart, and, as far as practicable, his hand and his purse. He will, therefore, regard with particular favour the interests of learning, religion and virtue, bestowing his suffrages on the wise and good, and cherishing those institutions, which are designed and calculated to improve the people.

We shall be the more convinced of the necessity of virtue to the preservation of civil liberty, if we consult history. What, but the prevalence of vice, can account for the destruction of all the popular governments, which have successively appeared in the world before our own? What, but that prostration of principle, that effeminacy of character, that selfish disregard of the interests of the state, which grow out of the indulgence of vicious propensities and passions,—envy and jealousy of superiour merit and talents, the love of ease and pleasure, of luxurious and expensive living, avarice, ambition, voluptuousness, and extravagance? Would the Grecian and Roman republics have lost their liberties, had they retained the simplicity and purity of manners, the integrity and vigour of character, the noble and generous devotion, to the public good, which they exhibited at some periods of their history? Was any thing wanting, but *virtue*, to have rendered the French revolution productive of a durable system of

free government? We all know that it was the excesses and crimes of the republic, which rendered it so short-lived, and occasioned the establishment of despotism.

The important truth I have been considering, shows the peculiar propriety of those *Laws*, which have for their object the protection and improvement of our morals. Such are the laws, to restrain the use of ardent spirits; to prevent gambling, vagrancy, licentiousness, and profane swearing; to enforce a due observance of the sabbath; to promote the diffusion of knowledge and piety, by encouraging schools, academies, colleges, and all institutions of learning and religion. Laws of this sort are conformable to the genius of the government; they serve as props to our political edifice; and are, therefore, eminently fit and useful. It is, indeed, this consideration, particularly, which gives our rulers their authority to interfere with the morals and religion of the people. The zeal, however, which prompts to such legislation, ought to be tempered with wisdom; for if it infringe private rights and go so far as to lose the support of public opinion, it may produce a reaction injurious to the most salutary usages and measures. By striving to obtain too much, men sometimes lose every thing.

My subject also manifests the singular folly and wickedness of unnecessarily passing laws, which have a tendency to corrupt the people;—laws, for instance, which are apt to be productive of fraud and perjury; which are vexatious and oppressive, and, therefore, being odious to large classes of citizens, are particularly liable to be violated. I say *unnecessarily*, because measures of this character are, no doubt, sometimes unavoidable,—such is the order and constitution of human affairs. There is, indeed, some temptation to violate the most common and indispensable laws. This is sufficiently evinced by the frequent occurrence of crimes. While, therefore, it is the duty of rulers to refrain, as far as possible, from such measures, as involve extraordinary temptations; it is the duty of the people, when such measures do take place, to regard them as special trials of their virtue, and as parts of those circumstances, which a wise Providence has ordered for their moral discipline and improvement.

From this source our moral and religious societies derive one of their strongest recommendations to public patronage. The Society for the Suppression of Intemperance,—the Evangelical Missionary Society,—Bible Societies,—all are valuable in this view. By promoting the improvement of individuals and classes of men, such institutions contribute to the preservation of our social system,—our fair fabric of liberty, law, morality and religion,—that inestimable order of things, *which leaves us to enjoy*

all that man is capable of enjoying, and which invites us to be all that man is capable of being.

Nothing can place in a clearer light the importance of attending to the qualifications of candidates for office. If virtue is required in every citizen, it can by no means be dispensed with in those, whose examples and opinions derive weight from their elevation in society. It is yet very common for men, either to lose sight of their consciences at elections, or to imagine that persons, who are very exceptionable in their principles and characters, may nevertheless be very good agents for the public. This absurd notion is probably suggested by the responsibility which is attached to office. Rulers, it is thought, will conduct right, because, if they do not, they will *at least* lose their places. Experience cannot, surely, have been duly attended to by those, whom such reasoning satisfies; otherwise the frequent abuses of trust, which happen, must have convinced them of its fallacy. Besides, responsibility has its limits; it influences only to a certain extent, and within a certain sphere; it does not reach to the *secret* practices of rulers, nor does it take cognisance of *much* that is *omitted* to be done.—of the neglect of opportunities for doing good, which keen-eyed zeal for the public service discovers and improves. Advantageous as the tribunal of public opinion certainly is, it is far from being a complete security for the faithful exercise of delegated power. Look well, then, to the characters of those, whom you clothe with authority. Consider the magnitude of the concerns intrusted to them; consider, above all things, that they are the guardians of the public morals.

Has Divine Providence seen fit to place us in circumstances, which present inducements and a field for the practice of virtue, which, perhaps, no other nation on earth possesses? Are the consequences of our principles, habits, and actions, be they good or bad, of greater importance, than they would be under a different form of government? Is our situation, at the same time, singularly favourable to the development and exercise of our intellectual and moral powers? Have we an opportunity to act as rational and accountable beings,—to be literally and truly *men?* Is it true, also, that not only our present comfort and enjoyment, but our most valuable interests,—interests, which respect the whole of our existence,—the simplicity and purity of our divine religion, and those qualities of heart and mind and life which constitute worth of character, depend in no small degree on the continuance and healthy condition of our political organization? And is not our *responsibility* proportionably great? *To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.* Much is given to us,—more, than was ever bestowed on any other peo-

ple. Every thing in our situation invites the culture, every thing favours the growth, of moral excellence. We are exalted to heaven in point of civil and religious privileges. We can, under God, preserve them by our virtues. We shall lose them only by our vices. Woe to us, then, if we *do* lose them!

LAICUS.

THE CHARACTER OF ZOLLIKOFER.

WE present our readers in the following article, with a character of Zollikofer, well known as a popular preacher during his life, and whose printed discourses have been very highly esteemed. He was born at St. Gall, in Switzerland, on the 5th of August, 1730. He was educated at the university of Utrecht, where the professors of divinity were in high repute, but used a poor system of instruction; so that Zollikofer used to say, 'The little that I know, I was obliged to teach myself,—chiefly after I came to years of maturity; for I had but a miserable education.' He however became extensively known, and was greatly admired and respected. He died on the 22d of January, 1788, in the 58th year of his age.—Many of his sermons have appeared in an English dress, and even amidst the imperfections of an ordinary translation have received the approbation of many of the best judges. Their great peculiarities of manner will be found from the following sketch to be strongly marked by the characteristics of the man.

"It is not my intention to meddle with the biography of Zollikofer, as being too imperfectly known to me, and as the worthy editor of his posthumous writings, appointed by himself, is far better qualified for the task. I shall confine myself solely to what I have been able to gather from my personal intercourse with him, and from the diligent perusal of his writings, concerning the peculiarities of his genius and of his character.

All the qualities of this man partook somewhat of privacy and retirement, but were therefore the more substantial. In his exterior no one in particular of his good qualities was discernible to any extraordinary degree: but only the result of all,—sedateness and composure. He felt deeply, and had a cold appearance. He thought much, and was taciturn. He was extremely benevolent, and not obtrusive in his kindness. The superficial observer saw nothing in him except a certain decorum, which

inspired respect, but announced no great internal activity. On a closer inspection his mind was seen to be ever at work, and his heart constantly agitated by lively emotions and even by passions.

Nobody that I was ever yet acquainted with, has had that consistency of character which Cicero before all things requires of a virtuous man, in so eminent a degree as Zollikofer. With what is called humour or caprice he was totally unacquainted. Neither his countenance nor his demeanour shewed any alteration one day more than another. He was not at one visit conversible and attentive, at another absent and pensive. He was not found at one time disposed to effusions of the heart, at another time to reserve. At all times he was the same, always in the middle way, always under the government of reason, always in a certain equipoise of his affections.

This was owing in a great measure to his being free from the ambition of shining on the spot by any of his good qualities. He seemed never to make it the subject of his thoughts how he might appear to others: he was only intent on what he was determined to be. When he had nothing more to say, he thought it no disgrace to be silent. He never held it his duty to be lavish in complaisance on every occasion: but if in the course of the conversation, any true sentiment occurred which at the same time might prove agreeable, he uttered it with propriety and evident complacency.

It has never been my fortune to take notice of a person who had arrived at equal perfection with Zollikofer in his thoughts and in his labours. There was in him an argumentative mind, a talent of nice discernment in matters relating to human actions and failings; a sound and vigorous judgment; the faculty of unfolding his thoughts with perspicuity; the talent of a really exquisite taste in literary composition. But these several capacities were not completely expanded by the education he received. His studies and his models were not the most perfect. The first sermons that I heard him deliver, composed in his early years, still retained some borrowed ideas, not of his own original conception,—a verbose manner of expression. They always differed from the general run of pulpit discourses; but they did not fix the attention,—did not yield information in the degree that Zollikofer was capable of fixing the attention and of giving information. But his sermons improved upon me from year to year both in matter and in delivery, in genius and in diction. Since the time of my first intimacy with him, when I consequently began to observe him more closely, how much more abundant has his moral instruction become, how much purer and more com-

pressed his style.—This cultivation of his genius he never ceased to continue till the last day of his life.

In his moral character the progress was less discernible, because in fact he was, even early in life, near to that perfection which his nature was able to reach, and because in general a man's character and the little alterations in it are not so striking to others, as the endowments of his mind. Nevertheless those who had for a series of years been attentive to Zollikofer, must have found I believe, that his gravity was more and more mingled with tenderness, his stern principles with gentle emotions: that though he retained all the original solidity of his character, he however became gradually more affable, pleasant and alert.

It is not the business of a public teacher to investigate truths from their primitive elements, but to deliver, to illustrate and to carry home to the heart of his hearers, those which are acknowledged by all reasonable persons, or must be immediately acknowledged whenever the meaning of them is once comprehended,—and which at the same time are of practical utility. Zollikofer studiously avoided in his sermons all inquiries that were too abstruse for vulgar apprehension, or for the generality of hearers. He did not trouble his audience with doubts, a practice which never fails to unsettle the conviction of the unlearned, even if they are not thoroughly understood, whereas the mischief can only be repaired by the solution when it is perfectly comprehended.

Few preachers before him ever ventured to introduce into the pulpit such specific relations, duties, faults, usages, pleasures of domestic and social life: still fewer have had the art of handling them at the same time with such dignity, with such fertility in important instruction, with so natural a reference to religion, as Zollikofer. His morality is not, as has so often been said of the precepts of persons of his class, proper for the pulpit, but impracticable in the world, and useless in the commerce of life. He distinguished the good that is to be wished, from the good that is to be expected in the present constitution of the world and amid the actual circumstances of society; and furnishes directions how the latter is to be attained, and the former approached.

He happened to live at a time, when some tenets of dogmatical theology, which formerly had been tenaciously adhered to, at least among such as were appointed to teach them, were beginning to be doubtful even to them. It was reserved for our days to see the clergy themselves take the torch of reason in their hands, for throwing a light on the particular objects of their study. Even Zollikofer never set about any inquiries till after he had entered on his office. His youth was passed among exam-

ples of a devotion nearly bordering on fanaticism, in which all reflection was laid aside. During his college studies and his preparatory exercises, his efforts were employed solely in endeavouring to comprehend and to fix in his memory, what was taught him. Not till arrived at the age of manhood, when the influence of authority was diminished with him, and his own understanding had attained to maturity; when the duty of a teacher summoned him to investigate truths for himself,—did he gradually break loose from the shackles of a system, and with an unbiassed mind press forward into the sanctuary of religion.

Accordingly, now, that the spirit of examination and philosophical research is spreading far and wide, now is the most arduous time for a preacher. The collisions of duties are more distressing to him, and happen more frequently than ever. The volatile are carried too far by the spirit of innovation. Anxious and foreboding minds would stop the progress of truth. The concealment of particular opinions under ambiguous expressions, is revolting to the honest and ingenuous; and the plain and frank declaration of them, especially if not yet brought to complete decisive inward certainty, fills the humane and discreet with consternation.

I think I am warranted in proposing Zollikofer, who doubtless was sensible to these difficulties, as a pattern of the method in which they are to be surmounted. He was at all times heard to declare boldly and honestly, whatever he clearly and firmly acknowledged as true. In proportion as the light in his perceptions increased, as the certainty of his convictions augmented, his courage grew greater in departing from tenets hitherto believed. But in points, where he still doubted, where he did not see thoroughly clear, he takes the vulgar proposition, giving it the most rational interpretation and the most practically useful application. He was neither hastily carried away by every new and specious idea, nor did he adhere to his early private opinions in spite of luminous reasons against them. Habitually slow and deliberate in undertaking, but vigorous, resolute and persevering in execution: such was his practice likewise in the investigation of religious tenets. He examined leisurely in silence and retirement, and carefully abstained in the mean time from touching on the still doubtful points. But what he discovered after such a trial, no authority could induce him to surrender, and no dread of the judgment of mankind could deter him from avowing.

Zollikofer possessed a peculiar elevation of mind, a high sense of liberty and independence, which is not always the concomitant of great endowments, or of profound learn-

ing. The latter often subdues instead of raising the mind, by consuming too much the bodily strength, and leaving the man too little leisure to enjoy the pleasing sensations that courage inspires. The condition of many of the learned contributes to render them timid, bashful and dependent on others. Zollikofer's natural disposition to a generous and liberal conduct was not suppressed by the niggardliness of fortune. Though not born in shining circumstances, yet he never was in want, and came early into a situation, which, with his moderate desires and his prudence in the management of his income, might be deemed affluent.

His beneficence, like the rest of his virtues, was active and concealed. The multitude of young persons, who had recourse to him in their necessities, was not less than the number of those who applied to him for advice. And neither the one nor the other departed unsatisfied from him, as far as his means or his sagacity sufficed to relieve their wants.

As nothing in general betrays more littleness of mind than avarice, so liberality is ever associated with magnanimity. Zollikofer embraced with alacrity every occasion of exercising this virtue; wherever propriety or charity called for expense, wherever relief was to be administered to the sick and the infirm, wherever useful arts and sciences were to be promoted and encouraged, he was ready with his offering.

In mentioning his greatness of mind, one feature of it must not be forgotten, which is, that he never strove to recommend himself to the notice of any man, otherwise than by what that man himself might perceive and remark in him. He required no other respect, than that which naturally accrued to him from his personal qualities. Concerning all testimonies and tokens of his worth,—of his fame which actually was spread throughout all Germany, of the veneration in which he was held by several great personages, of his extensive literary correspondence, which in general engaged him in the confidence of numbers of persons hoping to obtain from him advice, support or information,—of the approbation bestowed on his writings, he never gave the most distant intimation to a stranger, or even to an acquaintance, in order to draw from him a greater veneration. What he was, he left all who conversed with him to judge of themselves, from what they heard him say or saw him do, not from what others thought of him.

In his domestic connexions, where others for the most part betray coldness and neglect, reserving their efforts to please for the entertainment of strangers, Zollikofer was uniformly tender and assiduous in rendering himself agreeable. He was twice

married. Each time he preferred the company of his wife to the generality of societies, and made it his principal recreation. How great he thought his loss in losing his former, was evinced by the disposition to melancholy, the insensibility towards whatever had before amused him, which her death brought upon him. And how happy he was in his second, the extraordinary flow of spirits and good humour, which every one remarked in him during his last matrimonial connexion was a manifest proof. He was therefore by no means of a solitary and unsocial disposition. It even seemed as though he absolutely could not endure the loneliness of an unmarried state. He had however no less aversion to large companies, as being incapable of playing a part in them to his own satisfaction. His wife and one or two friends, were sufficient to his entertainment, whether he were desirous of nothing more than to unbend his mind, or sought for the enjoyment of social satisfaction in their converse. He did not however avoid company: and in any society that he happened to fall into, or was taken by his friends or relations, or led by official or other accidental connexions, he was easy and even cheerful, which is rarely the case with persons of his talents. He was always seen to be in his proper place in every company, even where the ordinary tone was extremely different from his, since he uniformly appeared in it with dignity, and carried thither reason and judgment, by means whereof he either kept those that were present within bounds, or was able with strict propriety to take part in their mirth.

The delineation of the man 'that offends not in word,' after the expression of the apostle James, is one of his finest compositions, and a real picture of its author. Few persons are so attentive as he was, to say nothing untrue. For that reason he was less loquacious than others, as it was impossible for him to say what he did not think, or to speak on what he had not previously considered. He knew that it was not in the power of man, to observe the most perfect sincerity, or by the communication of his sentiments to be useful to others, if he were as prompt with his judgment, his advice, his praise, as another in communicating to him his opinion, making known to him his circumstances, or reading to him his work. He therefore had the appearance of being reserved, distant, sometimes not obsequious enough, and cold. But this was because his mind was still intensely occupied with the sentiments or the concerns of the other, and he would not open himself to him, till he had fully determined within, what he held to be true, or what was the best method to be adopted on the occasion.

From such a man it is to be expected, that he should be constant in his inclinations, and particularly in his friendships. In fact he never alienated himself from any of the persons with whom he had once, after trial and from selection, entered into connexion. He bore with him to the grave the love and veneration of all who had once devoted these sentiments to him. Whatever is true and real, is in its nature constant: and even the versatility of others is fixed by a firm and always consistent man.

Were I to judge of the peculiarity of his talents; I should say, that his prominent abilities consisted not in profound philosophical penetration, not in poetical flights of fancy, but in plain and sound sense, an acute observation and the art of disquisition. Perspicuous thoughts were always the groundplot with him. Thence arose first sentiment; by this sometimes the fire of imagination was kindled. Had he been employed in compositions, where sentiment alone was intended to prevail, or where he was not sufficiently prepared by meditation, he might not have been so happy as in those calculated merely for instruction. His addresses to the Deity are not inferior to his sermons. In his exercises of devotion, his finest pieces are those which are drawn up in the form of meditations.

He laid no claim to an extensive erudition, although he was deeply versed in more than one department of literature, and was daily increasing his fund of knowledge. Like most men of sentiment and reflection, he was continually learning, and took pleasure in his studies, though he imagined he knew but little. The truth is, that, as his hours of labour were all taken up with his own thoughts, and with the actual, living world, which he ever made it his object to inform and to improve: the thoughts of others, and the perusal of books were reserved only for his hours of recreation;—from which he therefore obtained rather food and sustenance for his mind, than an accumulated store of learning.

His judgment in all matters that are amenable to the bar of reason, was extremely correct: and by it his taste was governed in objects of sentiment. On the value of literary, particularly philosophical productions, he pronounced as a competent judge: and had a nice discernment in the truly good style in every class, as he was a complete master of it in his own. He loved poetry and was sensible to its charms; neither was he indifferent to works of art. And though his complacency in the latter did not rise to extacy, nor his skill to that of a connoisseur: yet he might pass his judgment on them even among both connoisseurs and amateurs, without fear of scorn. His style, like his person, had a certain solemnity, which at first sight was not entirely free from

stiffness and formality. His delivery was accompanied by that grave deportment which commanded respect, and attended him in all the actions of his life. And this endowment of a suitable declamation is not one of the least merits in the functions of the office which he filled. It was not his action, it was not the language of his looks by which his pulpit eloquence was heightened. The motions of his body and of his hands were too uniform, the modulations of his voice not sufficiently varied: but his enunciation was so clear and distinct, and particularly the emphasis which he laid on every word was so adapted to the impression which the concomitant idea was designed to make, and so suited to the proper illustration of the sense, that the best judges were sensibly affected by the charms of an eloquent discourse, and those of the lower orders completely enabled to understand what they heard.

Zollikofer was neither vehement nor incessant in his application: but his whole heart and mind and his undivided attention were fixt on what he was about. Hence it was, that although, besides what the duties of his function required, he was obliged to devote much of his time to such as came to consult his advice or to ask relief, and even to visitors from curiosity or ceremony,—considerable portions likewise to the care of his health and to repose: yet the number of his literary performances is not small. He was free from one fault which authors and scholars are apt to fall into; that of putting off what they have to do, till they are compelled by necessity to set about it, or the moment is come when it is wanted. He sat down to work whenever he felt inclination and ability for it, was never in haste and never dilatory. And in this manner his best works were composed. Every delay is always an effect either of want of resolution or of indolence of mind. The contrary procedure of Zollikofer is therefore a sign of his self-command, and of the little vicissitude in his mental powers.

Zollikofer from his very infancy suffered from weak nerves and from a consumptive habit; two complaints, one rendering life exceedingly troublesome, and the other attacking it immediately. The former is apt to render a man ill-humoured and morose, by so frequently disturbing him in his occupations, and the other to fill him with anxiety from the danger with which it daily threatens him. Zollikofer was not thus affected by either: or if he felt irritations of this sort, he got the better of them before they were apparent to the bystanders. He was obliged to give up more of his time to recreation, than one of his active turn of mind could have wished: but he never complained of it. His pulpit exertions were often painful to him: but as long as

he thought he could go through them, he bore the uneasiness, without speaking much of it. And if he let any thing escape him concerning it, it was only when he thought it necessary for procuring himself a little relief. The profound silence which, as I have just remarked, he observed concerning such diseases as attacked his spirits, disables me from judging how painful they were, with which he had to contend. But by what I can infer from some accounts, his equal serenity was not always the consequence of a condition totally void of trouble, but of his persevering patience.

I proceed now to his piety, the virtue which cements the rest together, by deriving every kind of good and all our duties from one common source. It was the pure consequence of his convictions, as these proceeded from his own reflections.

Zollikofer's devotion consisted chiefly in the contemplation of those truths which concern God and our relations to him, and his piety in the assiduous discharge of his duties.—As he never made a show of those virtues, which are properly calculated to be known to others, since they nowhere find their objects but in society and make its utility their aim: so it is to be expected, that he withdrew, even from the sight of his friends, for those exercises of devotion which relate only to him who performs them, and require not the participation of others during the act. Nevertheless from some emotions with which I have occasionally seen him affected by the thoughts of God, while contemplating his works and the ways of his providence, I am somewhat enabled to judge, how greatly his soul must have been affected, when he resigned himself entirely to these impressions. Accordingly, I should suppose, that in this particular also, his feelings were stronger and more ardent than the expressions of them: and in like manner as under a certain appearance of coldness and indifference he was a tender husband and a warm friend; so in fact his devotion was frequently fervent, when he seemed only engaged in calm meditation. Perhaps with persons, who like Zollikofer express their ideas so well, and their feelings so imperfectly, the reason may be, that the former are clearly evolved and distinct, the latter extremely concentrated, as it were indivisible, and therefore the more intrinsic.

The last scene of his life was, if I may so express myself, of a piece with the whole: he was when dying what he had always been through life. Those who attended or were about him in these awful moments, are better qualified to inform the public of the particular circumstances of his departure, than I can be. I only know from the accounts that have been communicated to me, that, judging from several of his actions, he certainly expect-

ed his dissolution, while he carefully avoided every thing that could excite in his family the apprehension of losing him; that in his last days he preferred entire solitude even to the presence of his wife and friends, though at the same time he gave them the most convincing proofs that he still loved them as tenderly as ever, and that he retired from them only in order that they might suffer the less, and that he might reserve his strength entire for the conflict he had himself to sustain.

To begin preparation for death when he is already at the door, is a foolish attempt, which could never enter the thoughts of such a person as Zollikofer, and which he had no occasion to make. But for bearing more easily the struggles with which the dissolution of the body is inevitably attended, for keeping present to the mind the long fostered principles of religion, and the well known grounds of consolation and satisfaction it affords, when assailed by the most harassing sensations from without: no method is more effectual, at least in my estimation,—which is here in perfect unison with the behaviour of my friend,—than retreat, not only from noise, but likewise from whatever may excite any lively emotion. The soul should now be entirely shut up within herself, entirely occupied with her own concerns, and waste as little of her strength as possible, on external objects, overburdened already by the dying body. I am well aware, that a great difference is here occasioned by circumstances, constitution, the structure of the nerves, the nature of the disease, and that one good man cannot die exactly like another good man, any more than all can exhibit their virtue in precisely the same manner during life. But, whether from the uniformity in our characters, whether I am better able to transport myself into Zollikofer's situation, because I knew him so thoroughly and loved him so cordially; I am sure that I can perfectly figure to myself why he was desirous of being entirely alone when sick and dying, sincerely as he might have wished to share his life with certain persons; and I approve his conduct, that even in these moments he acted as he thought was for the best.

In this resolute prosecution of his best perceptions, and with that composure and serenity of mind, which is ever the effect of it, he resigned his spirit, without a murmur at the languishing and painful state, in which he was, in sure and certain hope of that which awaited him, in calm reliance upon God from the conviction of his goodness. Thus in a few rapid strokes was his death sketched out to me by a friend. I have chiefly confined myself to his life, of which I also was a witness; and in the remembrance of the sound understanding, the public spirit and the self-command that reigned therein throughout, I shall

always find a faithful monitor at hand, to guard me against surprise, to resist tumultuous passion, or rouse my drooping spirit to fortitude both in action and forbearance, and lead me to meet difficulty or danger without dismay.

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

DR. FULLER.

Dr. Thomas Fuller was one of the most celebrated of the English divines, who lived in the troublesome days of the commonwealth, and the civil wars that preceded it. He was remarkable for his loyalty and private worth; for great powers of mind; and for a playful wit, which he could not help introducing into his most serious writings. He composed a variety of works, which are now very little known, though they abound with sensible and useful thoughts. His quaint style was in part the fault of his age,—is certainly a fault—and yet no one would probably be willing to dispense with any of its peculiarities. We intend offering to our readers occasionally some extracts from his "Prophane and holy State;" a book, which has become very rare; since no edition of it has been printed since the year 1657. We will begin with his picture of

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER.

"He endeavours to get the generall love and good will of his parish. This he doth, not so much to make a benefit of them, as a benefit for them; that his ministry may be more effectual: otherwise, he may preach his own heart out, before he preacheth any thing into theirs. The good conceit of a physician is half a cure; and his practice will scarce be happy, where his person is hated. Yet he humours them not in his doctrine to get their love; for such a spaniel is worse than a dumbe dog. He shall sooner get their good will by walking uprightly, than by crouching and creeping. If pious living and painfull labouring in his calling will not win their affections, he counts it gain to lose them. As for those which causelessly hate him, he pities and prayes for them; and such there will be. I should suspect his preaching had no salt in it, if no galled horse did wince.

He is strict in ordering his conversation. It was said of one, who preached very well and lived very ill, 'That when he was out of the pulpit, it was pity he should ever go into it; and when he was in the pulpit, it was pity he should ever come out of it.' But our minister lives sermons. And yet I deny not but dissolute men, like unskilfull horsemen, which open a gate on the wrong side, may by the virtue of their office open heaven for others, and shut themselves out.

His behaviour towards his people is grave and courteous. Not too austere and retired; especially he detesteth affected gravity, (which is rather on men than in them,) whereby some belie their register books, antedate their age to seem far older than they are, and plait and set their brows in an affected sadnesse. Whereas St. Anthony the monk might have been known among hundreds of his order by his cheerful face; he having ever (though a most mortified man) a merry countenance.

He will not offer to God of that which costs him nothing; but takes pains beforehand for his sermons. Demosthenes never made any oration on the sudden; and he was wont to say, That he showed how he honoured and reverenced the people of Athens, because he was careful what he spake unto them. Indeed, if our minister be surprised with a sudden occasion, he counts himself rather to be excused than commended, if premeditating only the bones of his sermons, he clothes it with flesh extempore. As for those, whose long custom hath made preaching their nature, that they can discourse sermons without study, he accounts their examples rather to be admired than imitated.

Having brought his sermon into his head, he labours to bring it into his heart, before he preaches it to his people. Some have questioned ventriloquie, when men strangely speak out of their bellies, whether it can be done lawfully or no: might I coin the word cordiloquie, when men draw the doctrines out of their hearts, sure all would count this lawful and commendable.

He chiefly reproves the reigning sins of the time and place he lives in. We may observe that our Saviour never inveighed against idolatry, usury, Sabbath breaking, among the Jews; not that these were not sins, but that they were not practised so much in that age, wherein wickednesse was spun with a finer thred; and therefore Christ principally bent the drift of his preaching against spirituall pride, hypocrisie, and traditions, then predominant amongst the people. Also our minister confuteth no old heresies, which time hath confuted; nor troubles his auditory with such strange hideous cases of conscience, that it is more hard to find the case than the resolution.

He doth not onely move the bread of life, and toss it up and down in generalities, but also breaks it into particular directions. Drawing it down to cases of conscience; that a man may be warranted in his particular actions, whether they be lawfull or not.

His similes and illustrations are always familiar, never contemptible. Indeed reasons are the pillars of the fabrick of a sermon, but similitudes are the windows which give the best lights. He avoids such stories, whose mention may suggest bad thoughts to the auditours; and will not use a light comparison to make thereof a grave application, for fear lest his poyson go further than his antidote.

He provideth not only wholesome, but plentifull food for his people. Almost incredible was the painfulnesse of Baronius, the compiler of the voluminous annals of the church, who, for thirty years together, preached three or four times a week to the people. As for our minister, he preferreth rather to entertain his people with wholesome cold meat, which was on the table before, than with that, which is hot from the spit, raw and half roasted. Yet, in repetition of the same sermon, every edition hath a new addition, if not of new matter, of new affections. 'Of whom (saith St. Paul) we have told you often, and now we tell you weeping.'

He makes not that wearisome, which should ever be welcome. Wherefore his sermons are of an ordinary length, except on extraordinary occasions. What a gift had John Halseback, professour at Vienna, in tediousnesse! who, being to expound the prophet Esay to his auditours, read twenty-one years on the first chapter, and yet finished it not.

He counts the success of his ministry the greatest preferment. Yet herein hath God humbled many painful pastours, in making them to be clouds to rain, not over Arabia the happy, but over the stonie or desert: so that they may complain with the herdsman in the poet:

'Heu mihi, quam pingui macer est mihi taurus in arvo!'

Yet such pastours may comfort themselves, that great is their reward with God in heaven, who measures it not by their successe, but endeavours. Besides, though they see not, their people may feel benefit by their ministry. Yea, the preaching of the word in some places is like the planting of woods, where, though no profit is received for twenty years together, it comes afterwards. And grant that God honours thee not to build his

temple in thy parish, yet thou maist with David provide metall and materialls for Solomon thy successour to build it with.

He is moderate in his tenets and opinions. Not that he gilds over lukewarmnesse in matters of moment, with the title of discretion; but withall he is carefull not to entitle violence in indifferent and inconcerning matters to be zeal. Indeed men of extraordinary tallness (though otherwise little deserving) are made porters to lords: and those of unusuall littlenesse are made ladies' dwarfs; whilst men of moderate stature may want masters. Thus, many notorious for extremities may find favourers to prefer them, whilst moderate men in the middle truth may want any to advance them.

Lying on his death-bed he bequeathes to each of his parishioners his precepts and example for a legacie; and they, in requital, erect every one a monument for him, in their hearts. As for outward estate, he commonly lives in too bare pasture to die fat. It is well if he hath gathered any flesh, being more in blessing than in bulk."

We will set by the side of this the character of

THE GOOD PARISHIONER.

"Though neare to the church, he is not far from God. Like unto Justus, Acts xviii. 8. 'One that worshippeth God, and his house joyned hard to the synagogue.' Otherwise, if his distance from the church be great, his diligence is the greater to come thither in season. He is timely at the beginning of prayer. Yet as Tullie charged some dissolute people for being such sluggards, that they never saw the sun rising or setting, as being always up after the one, and abed before the other: so some negligent people never hear prayers begun, or sermon ended; the confession being past before they come, and the blessing not come before they are passed away.

In sermon, he sets himself to heare God in the minister. Therefore divesteth he himself of all prejudice; the jaundice in the eyes of the soul presenting colours false unto it. He harkens very attentively. 'Tis a shame when the church itself is cœmeterium, wherein the living sleep above the ground, as the dead do beneath.

At every point that concerns himself he turns down a leaf in his heart; and rejoiceth that God's word hath pierced him, as hoping that whilest his soul smarts, it heals. And, as it is no manners for him that hath good venison before him, to ask whence it came, but rather fairly to fall to it; so hearing an excellent sermon, he never enquires whence the preacher had it, but falls aboard to practise it.

He accuseth not his minister of spight in particularising him. It does not follow, that the archer aimed because the arrow hit. Rather, our parishioner reasoneth thus: If my sin be notorious, how could the minister misse it? If secret, how could he hit it without God's direction? But foolish hearers make even the bells of Aaron's garments "*to clink as they think.*" And a guilty conscience is like a whirlpool, drawing in all to itself, which otherwise would passe by. One, causelessly disaffected to his minister, complained that he in his last sermon had personally inveighed against him; and accused him thereof to a grave religious gentleman in the parish. 'Truly (said the gentleman) I had thought in his sermon he had meant me; for it touched my heart.' This rebated the edge of the other's anger.

He is bountiful in contributing to the repair of God's house. For though he be not of their opinion, who would have the churches under the gospell conformed to the magnificence of Solomon's temple; and adorn them so gaudily that devotion is more distracted then raised, and men's souls rather dazzled then lightened; yet he conceives it fitting, that such sacred places should be decently and properly maintained.

He is respectfull to his minister's widow and posterity, for his sake. My prayer shall be, that ministers' widows and children may never stand in need of such relief; and may never want such relief, when they stand in need of it."

REVIEW.

ARTICLE IX.

A Statement of the Proceedings in the First Church at Dedham, respecting the settlement of a Minister in 1818, *with some considerations on Congregational Church polity. By a Member of the said Church and Parish, at the request of a* multitude within *and* without. Cambridge: printed by Cummings and Hilliard.

A Discourse delivered before the Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts, at their Annual Meeting in Boston, June 1, 1820. By Aaron Bancroft, D. D. Pastor of the second Congregational Church in Worcester. Boston: printed by Wells and Lilly. 1820.

It is difficult to say, which is the most remarkable, the sudden stop which was put to the progress of reformation in the middle

of the seventeenth century, the period of the emigration of our ancestors, or the rapid change which has taken place in this respect within the last few years. That the bold and fearless spirit, which distinguished Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the early reformers, should have been so soon subdued, can only be accounted for by political causes, or by the operation of human passions, such as we shall endeavour to explain.

The arm of civil authority in Great Britain, supported and encouraged as it was by the joy of the whole nation, at being relieved from the hypocritical and heartless tyranny and nonsense of the Roundheads and Levellers, was too strong for the few serious and enlightened friends of rational religious freedom, and the thinking part of the Dissenters have since that period been sufficiently thankful in being freed from actual persecution, and in being gradually restored to a very limited portion of their civil rights.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that in England, the hierarchy, with all its strange and unscriptural doctrines and forms, half popish, and half protestant, should have continued to this day to check the progress of free inquiry, and to prevent the adoption of the pure and simple forms of worship and doctrine of the primitive church. Such has been the case, and such most assuredly is the cause of it.—We might indeed add, that ambition having been satisfied by throwing off the Romish yoke, it was exceedingly convenient for the support of the throne and of the aristocracy, to retain the patronage derived from the power of making so many ecclesiastical lords, and of giving away one tenth part of all the revenues of the land.

It is a little more difficult to account for the intolerant spirit of our persecuted ancestors, a spirit which prevailed in our country from its first settlement till within the last half century, and whose speedy extinction may be hoped for and argued from the convulsive paroxysms under which it is at present suffering.

The prevalence of this odious and unchristian spirit, may be in part attributed simply to the *love of power*, a love, the most cherished, and the most universal. This was encouraged by the existence of a single, overpowering sect; and we may ascribe our gradual liberation from ecclesiastical domination, and our restoration to the rights of conscience, in no inconsiderable degree, to the fantastic multiplication of different opinions and persuasions, (some indeed not entitled to much respect, except for the sincerity of those who hold them,) which now renders combination to oppress and tyrannize, difficult, if not impossible.

Had there been but one sect in our country, it is probable that it would always have had it in its power, as in the early period

of our history, to avail itself of the arm of flesh, and the sword of the civil magistrate, to teach what the doctrines of scripture are, and to suppress all opinions contrary to the lawful human creed. Dissenters from the *established* faith, (no matter *how* established) have in all ages been deemed "heretics,"—it being as true in religious disputes, that those who fail of procuring a majority to their sentiments are heretics, as that those, in civil contentions, who are not successful, are deemed rebels. Names, in all such cases, change with power.

This is the great secret of the authority ascribed to the practice and opinions of the church. Out of the 1800 years since our Saviour's death, and that of his apostles and disciples, there has only been a short period of fifty years, and that in America alone, in which opinion has been *truly* free; and even here, it is not free now, except in a small spot in Massachusetts; for though we have no longer the prison and the faggot, we have the averted eye, the affected sneer, the refusal of courtesy, to those who dare to interpret the scriptures for themselves.

These things may explain in some degree, the paradox, that error should so long have usurped the place of Divine revelation.

But it was not probably a *love of power alone*, which excited and inflamed the persecuting and narrow spirit of the early divines and brethren of the New England churches. Though persecuted themselves, they had not imbibed the truly catholic spirit of the gospel. Ages are necessary to effect any important changes in the characters of men, or in opinions. Many of their early prejudices were too deeply rooted, to be suddenly, or by a hasty effort, torn up. They require something like the process of subduing our forests; the trees must be first girdled, then cut down and burnt; but the cultivator must wait patiently, till the roots and stumps are rotten, before he can hope to have a smooth and even field, yielding readily to the plough, and offering no obstacles to his industry and skill. Our ancestors, though they deemed it horrible to have 2000 pious ministers, of their own opinions, ejected in one day for nonconformity, and though they shuddered at the picture in their primers, of the pious Rogers, with his nine children, at the stake; yet would have deemed it a pious work to burn an organ, or a cassock, or a quaker who should return after expulsion, because their dread of episcopal power, with all its abominations of tythes, and simony, and plurality of benefices, and the consequent and indeed shameful poverty of the inferior clergy, were still fresh and festering in their minds; and as to the quakers, they were afraid that their own infallibility should be called in question; for it was, till within

the last half century, an axiom, with all Christian churches, that, (though others were not,) they, the elect and favoured of God, were, if not infallible, yet certainly never in the wrong.

These are some among the many causes of the stop put to a reformation, as glorious in its beginning, as it has been halt and lame in its progress.

But whatever may have been the causes, whether we are or are not correct in stating them, it is not now to be denied against the authority of our ecclesiastical records, and the testimony of Hubbard and the superstitious Mather, that our theological rulers were scarcely less intolerant than Laud and his associates. They were less cruel, but they were as stiff, as dictatorial, and thought themselves as infallible.

This spirit began to grow more feeble in the second century of our history, and we probably owe this in part to the violence and fanaticism of Whitfield and his followers. These men went so far beyond the sober fanaticism of our regular clergy, that they compelled them to think and read, in order to refute them. Hence the church saw Chauncy, Mayhew, Cooper, and many others, venturing into a new and untrodden field, and the liberality and intelligence of the inhabitants of Boston supported their learned and pious pastors in the truly scriptural work. Still the rules for the government of the churches continued to be, though loose and fluctuating, according to the character of the pastor, his learning and liberality, in the main intolerant.

Creeds of human invention were established as tests of Christian fellowship, and as conditions of admission, both to the sacred office of pastor, and to the humbler but more important rights of baptism and communion; and many thousands, we speak with conviction, have been kept out of the pale of the church by measures perfectly arbitrary and unscriptural.

But a new day is dawning upon us. The doors of the sanctuary are no longer shut by creeds, adopted in the dark ages of the church, which not even the adepts can explain. It is hoped that all who believe in Jesus Christ, will hereafter be admitted on the same liberal terms on which our Saviour admitted his disciples, and on which the apostles introduced the converted heathen into the church. It is indeed to be lamented, that people living in a christian country, baptized into its faith, and attending its worship, should be excluded from the rights of christian fellowship, and debarred from the power of voting in religious concerns, because they are not acceptable to the few, who have signed articles which they did not comprehend, and which form no portion of the requisitions for admission in the sacred scriptures.

It would seem strange, that, in an age in which such surprising advances have been made in the exact sciences, in physic, in the philosophy of the human mind, in political economy, in the science of government, and with regard to the civil rights of mankind, no new light should have been thrown on the doctrines of theology, no reformation have taken place in our creeds, or in the forms of worship, and the order and discipline of the church. It cannot be pretended they were perfect before, because it is notorious they were corrupt, and odiously corrupt, before the reformation; and it cannot be even imagined by any rational man, that those who were educated in a corrupt religion could at once see and feel, and be prepared to change, every thing that was bad. Some old prejudices would still cling to them. Something would be allowed by them for the difficulty of effecting an entire change. Something proposed, or some abuses overlooked, from policy. No reformers, however enlightened themselves, can well go farther than Solon, to give the people such a system as they will bear. And it is difficult to admit the opinion, that Luther, a monk, or Calvin, or the Westminster divines saw the whole counsel of God, and entirely purified the established system, except indeed, on the ground of their being divinely inspired, which in this age, we think, will hardly be expressly avowed. The wise saying of the venerable pastor of the Leyden flock, Robinson, need not be repeated, that it would be strange, indeed, if the earliest reformers should have passed from such entire darkness into perfect light, after such a darkness had endured for 1200 years. It did indeed so happen, that the early reformers stopped at the *very threshold.* They were either so exhausted by the greatness of their noble efforts, or, which is more probable, were so affected by their former prejudices, that they shut the door at once against all further improvements, and seemed as anxious to be considered the founders of a *new and perfect* system, as if they had not seen the folly of the pretensions to infallibility of those who had preceded them—the papists. Hence they left unerased, in their creeds, a multitude of doctrines, entirely unscriptural, which were nothing but the shreds of catholic superstitions. Content with dethroning the mother of God, (as the Virgin Mary is called,) and the whole army of saints, they still preserved the Platonic mystery of the Trinity, and the still more exceptionable doctrines, which now threaten to render the self-constituted judge and executioner of Servetus, immortal. They put aside the direct and simple authority of our Saviour and his apostles, and placed their faith in an uninspired, honest, but deceived and violent minister of Geneva.

It is however sufficient matter of consolation, if not of exultation, at the close of ages, during which a majority of christians have held it a matter of duty and religious obligation not to think at all, but to receive all the doctrines which the darker ages have transmitted to them as incontrovertible truths, that there is a prospect of a new era in the church, as important as that of the first reformation;—an era, in which sober, serious, enlightened, and free inquiry will be deemed no unpardonable sin; in which we may lawfully inquire what is or is not true in the most momentous of all concerns, as we have long been permitted to do in the physical sciences; in which men may securely ask what said our Saviour and his apostles, and venture to reject the absurdities of the semibarbarian formers of creeds in the middle ages. It is indeed strange, that so much respect should be paid to the creeds established or promulgated by men, whose literature, philosophy, and science we reject with the utmost contempt. The reverence for human glossaries and explanations of the sacred text is most unaccountable, when we have the sacred volume itself, confessedly in a state of most unexampled purity, and when we are so much better fitted, than most of our predecessors have been, for its examination.

The two publications, whose titles stand at the head of this article, claim our attention on account of the interesting questions, connected with the rights and liberties of the christian community, to which they give rise. The first named pamphlet has been for some time before the public, and should have received attention at the time of its publication, had we not thought it best that the great question of principle and right, which is involved in the case it represents, should be discussed as separately as possible from the excitements of feeling, and local and personal allusions, which unavoidably attend the consideration of such a subject while the occasion is new. We cannot be certain, that even now, after the lapse of months, we shall be able to come to the general question with all the coolness and impartiality we could desire, because the violent and abusive style of this pamphlet presents perpetual occasions of irritation. In attempting, therefore, to establish our general positions, we shall take as little notice as possible (we cannot avoid taking some) of the particulars of this case, or the character of this book.

Neither is it our intention to review at large the excellent discourse of Dr. Bancroft. It is sufficient that it sustains the well earned reputation of its venerable author, a man, whose praise ought to be in all the churches, at least in all which aim at the restoration of the simplicity in faith, order and discipline which prevailed in the apostolic age. It ought never to be forgotten, in this period,

when so many able men have arisen, with the zeal and resolution to restore christianity to its original purity, that Dr. Bancroft, at a still earlier period, following at a little interval the footsteps of Chauncy and Mayhew, took a noble stand, and has uniformly maintained, at the hazard of his reputation and success in life, the purity of our religion, in its doctrines, discipline, and worship. This species of merit is very likely to be overlooked by those who are born and educated in days of greater liberality. They have very feeble notions of the dangers and difficulties which the first reformers of this second age of reformation had to encounter.

Our present object will lead us to consider particularly only that part of Dr. Bancroft's discourse, which is connected with the subject of the other pamphlet. It is the great question of the rights, forms, and liberties of christian churches, to which we would call the attention of our readers, and which we conceive are not only drawn in question, but denied by the "Statement" of Mr. Lamson's ordination. This pamphlet denies to the great body of christians some of their most important rights, and seeks to establish, what it would seem our religion of all others, is least calculated, and was the least designed to support, an *aristocracy among the brethren*; (the very terms themselves imply a contradiction;)—an aristocracy, not founded on talents, property, virtue, or superior piety, but on accident, giving to those who have joined the church, as it is technically called, a power over the comforts, opinions, property, and rights of their christian brethren, who worship in the same congregation, and whom a tenderness of conscience, or doubts as to the terms of a covenant often unscriptural, may have kept out of the pale of the church.

It is in opposition to this principle, that the love of truth and religious freedom has called us forth. We appear for christians generally, for the great body of christian worshippers, whose rights have long been usurped, and so long, that the usurpers, like the Holy Catholic Church, rest their claims on prescription and lapse of time; as if the rules which govern the title to an acre of ground, are to bind the conscience, and limit the express authority of Holy Writ. We state in the outset, that we deny any human authority to interpret the scriptures; and we hold that every church, by which we understand every congregation of christian worshippers, has the unalienable right to interpret the scriptures for themselves, in no wise restrained by the doctrines or rules of preceding councils, synods, or churches. We would however most respectfully consider the reasons alleged for any existing rule, order, or mode of discipline, and we would not

rashly make innovations, unless thereto moved by serious, intelligent, studious examination, and conviction of the errors of the past or prevailing establishments.

This single remark, unless it can be overthrown by shewing that there is a *scriptural authority* given to the representatives of the churches in sæcula sæculorum, which all the supporters of the Divinum Jus of councils, and synods, and presbyteries, have as yet failed to do, is of itself a sufficient reply to this laboured pamphlet.

If needlessly and unjustifiably to give the greatest possible pain to a christian pastor, to the council which introduced him to the holy office, and to the majority of a religious society; if to treat so solemn a subject with occasional displays of wit and levity be a great sin, which we fear it is, we are satisfied that the author of this pamphlet, in the hour of sickness or death, will suffer as much pain, as those who are injuriously treated by him could desire, *if they were not christians.*

It is from the internal evidence furnished by *the work itself*, that we have formed this opinion. From this source, and this alone, we infer the innocence of the persons whom he accuses; and the uprightness and excellent judgment and discernment of the venerable and learned council who advised the settlement of Mr. Lamson.

There is something very painful and humiliating in the reflection, that the most bitter disputes have frequently arisen among persons of the same family, fraternity, society, or village; and still more humbling to remark, that those controversies to which religion has given birth, have appeared to excite a more than ordinary degree of acerbity and virulence.

This is probably owing to the disappointment we feel when we are unexpectedly deprived of the friendship of those upon whom we most naturally depend for our common and every day enjoyments, and to the sentiment which leads us to consider it a matter of conscience (an unsound conscience however) to adhere more obstinately to our opinions on religious topics than on any others. Surely it is a *perversion of conscience*, since upon religion, of all topics, we ought to be the most indulgent and forbearing, granting more to the weakness of our neighbour, (if it be a weakness,) of which we are not constituted the judges, than on any other subject of morals, or manners, or principles. Intelligent men, candid, liberal men, will never feel so much distrust of their own opinions, and entertain so much charity for their neighbour, as on topics of religion, in which God has left so much power and imposed so entire and separate an obligation in

the individual—in which so much reposes in the secret of the heart, and so little in the exterior profession.

The pamphlet, on which we are about to make some remarks, may be divided into two parts entirely distinct.

The first regards the authority of the council, considered with relation both to the civil and ecclesiastical law, if there be any ecclesiastical law other than the scriptures, (which we deny.)

Secondly, the expediency or reasonableness of the decision of the council, technically called "their result."

The second part we do not think it proper to discuss, for reasons which the author himself has given. There is no writer, ancient or modern, catholic or protestant, monkish or congregational, who has carried the doctrine of the authority of ecclesiastical councils higher or further than he has done. If therefore the council in this case was duly and regularly convened, on his own principles, it is not in the power of any other body to question its doings. It is indecorous, and subversive of all principle, to enter into the merits of their decision, as to the facts and principles before them. They were the sole, unamenable judges.—Their result should be considered as conclusive as the verdict of a jury, or the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction. This is the necessary consequence of the author's own reasoning. For these reasons we think it fruitless, and worse than fruitless, to enter into the inquiry, whether on the facts proved before the council, their result was proper and principled—and we reject therefore as highly unbecoming, inconsistent and unprincipled, all the taunting insinuations, and severe reflections on the council and their proceedings. That council, were, under God, the sole judges of all the questions submitted to them, and a popular appeal from them, with garbled, ex parte, and mutilated statements of the evidence, is directly contrary to all the rules which govern tribunals, military, civil, or religious. It could not be hoped that any result, which any council could make in a case like the one at Dedham, would be satisfactory to all parties; *least of all* to those, who were resolved *not* to be satisfied, and who denied, in limine, the authority of the tribunal.

All impartial christians will however, be convinced, from the perusal of the result, that it was wise, and the only means of preserving any thing like the regular worship of God in that parish. Compromise was hopeless. Time would only widen rather than heal the breaches. It was beyond all human probability, that two thirds of a parish, if thwarted in the choice of a man, whom, after six months' probation, they had unanimously approved,

would have united in a choice of another, selected by those who obstinately refused to yield their private opposition to so general a voice.

The whole argument in this pamphlet, against the expediency of settling or ordaining Mr. Lamson, may be comprized in this short proposition, "that six months' probation was insufficient, and that there was reasonable ground to believe that two thirds of the parish would charitably yield to the prejudices of one third." For ourselves, judging merely from the temper of this work, we are satisfied that a result which should have excluded Mr. Lamson, and forced the majority to a new choice, would only have been productive of a long and interminable religious feud, highly derogatory to the cause of our charitable religion—a dispute, which must finally have issued in a separation, which was the worst possible effect that could have followed from the ordination; but which the council had a right to hope would be *prevented* by his settlement.

That it was *not prevented*, may in a great degree be attributed to the illiberal and unforgiving spirit of the minority, and to this pamphlet, which denied the authority of the council, and thus gave occasion to weaker minds to make a schism in the church of Christ in Dedham.

It is admitted in this work, that the objections to the ordination of Mr. Lamson, did not arise *from any difference of religious opinions, or any disapprobation of those held by the candidate, nor from any objections to his moral character.* This is very happy—and it justified the ordaining council in the hope they expressed, that the objections would yield as soon as the question should be settled.

The conduct of the minority, in this case, has been, however, such as could not have been looked for in a liberal and enlightened age. The character of the pastor elect and ordained, has been treated with indecent levity, and unkind sarcasm. We have not read or heard of one case in the history of religious disputes between churches and parishes and their pastors, which affords so weighty reasons for withholding the absolute power contended for, from the bare majority of a church. The case itself proves, that the church is as likely to be illiberal, unjust, intemperate, and despotic as the parish; and this example goes far to confirm us in the opinion, that if such a power of absolute veto in cases of election, does not reside in the church, by the only authoritative canons, the scriptures, and the practice of the primitive church, we ought not to suffer or submit to the uncontrolled exercise of it.

Thus much it seemed important to say respecting this particular case. But the *principles* asserted and denied, with some degree of assurance in this case, are of far greater moment. It is to the christian world of little consequence, whether Mr. Lamson was, or was not, duly and canonically ordained—but it is of immense moment to ascertain, whether the body technically called "a church," be in fact a superior, or even a distinct coequal body in christian societies, having a *veto* on the proceedings of the christian worshippers or brethren, who are owners of pews, are taxed, attend public worship—have been baptized, are in faith and worship, christians, but who have not yet asked for the privilege of being admitted to full communion. For ourselves, we do not hesitate to say, that we are not as yet satisfied that this question has been to this day fairly discussed—nor are we capable of discussing it as it ought to be. We merely propose to draw the attention of theological proficients to the subject.

That the whole argument in the pamphlet against Mr. Lamson's ordination, proceeds on the assumption, that there is such a body, jure divino, with perpetual succession and exclusive privileges, is most certainly true. It is true also, that the late learned chief justice Parsons, in two cases which came before the court, did seem to admit that such a body, distinct from the great mass of christian believers, did rightfully exist, although he very greatly limited its powers. Yet as the question, whether the church means any thing *more than all the christians* who worship in a particular place, was not *necessarily* before the court, and as it is a wise rule with judges not to decide incidentally any questions not involved in the case, we may venture to say, that the question is now entirely open. It is competent to us to discuss the point, whether the church, in the language of scripture, or in the writings of the fathers, meant any thing more than the whole body of baptized and worshipping christians.

We do not mean here to consider the numerous other senses in which the word ecclesia, or church, was used by the early christian writers. We shall speak of it only in the sense in which it was applied to a congregation of believers worshipping in one place.

Now we contend, and think we shall be able to shew, that there were never *two classes* of worshippers,—if we except the catechumens, who were not permitted to hear all the services, and who were unbaptized.

We expect to shew further, that the *right* of partaking the communion or eucharist, was common to *all* the congregation; but that many who belonged to the church did not partake of the

communion, and still were considered as brethren, and enjoyed all their rights as such.

In short, we hope to prove, that there is no better foundation for a *separate order* among the *laity*, than there is for three orders among the clergy, a doctrine which we congregationalists deny, and which lord chancellor King has most unanswerably disproved.

To minds accustomed to logical inquiries and reasoning, it will be useless to attempt to shew, that if we shall succeed in supporting these opinions, then all the objections urged on the part of the small majority of the small *church* in Dedham are fully refuted; and we at the same time prove, that it was not essential that a *new* church should have been gathered, and solemnly formed prior to Mr. Lamson's consecration, since, upon our supposition, there was at the time subsisting a scriptural church, who had long worshipped in that place, who had, as we hope to shew, the right of election of their presbyter or pastor, a right which they had regularly exercised by not only a vote of the majority, but of a majority of *two thirds*.

We shall take as our guide, lord chancellor King in preference to any other, because he is quoted with high respect, and as decisive authority, by the author of the pamphlet in question. We have other and the following reasons for selecting him as our guide. His fairness and impartiality, his learning, his piety; his high standing as a layman and lawyer, unbiassed by the unavoidable prejudices, which must creep into the minds of those, whose power and standing as dignitaries of the church are affected by such questions; but above all, because he quotes his authority for every sentiment, at large.

What was "*the church*" in its most usual acceptation?

"The usual and common acceptation of the word (church) is that of a particular church, that is, a *society of christians*, meeting together in one place under their proper pastors, for the performance of religious worship, and the exercise of christian discipline."*

He adds, that the church may be divided into two parts, "into the *people* that composed the body of the church, and those persons who were set apart for religious and ecclesiastical employments, or, to conform to our ordinary dialect, into the clergy and *laity*."†

* "The Constitution, Discipline, &c. of the primitive church, by an Impartial hand;" pages 7, 8. now known to have been written by Sir Peter King.

† On this head he cites Corinthians, 1 Epist. Homil. 11. in Jerem. p. 113, 114, vol. i.

The church, then, according to this authority, were the *society of christians*, worshipping in one place. They were divided into two classes, *clergy* and *laity ;* not into three, *clergy*, *church members*, and *ordinary worshippers*.

So too, "*parish and church*" were in the language of the primitive church, convertible terms, or intended the same thing. "The epistle of Clemens Romanus, or the bishop of Rome, was to the *church of God*, *parishing* at Corinth, that is, dwelling or living at Corinth. So that a *parish* is the same with a particular church or a *single congregation*." Therefore he adds, "that a *parish* and a *particular church* are synonymous terms, signifying one and the same thing."*

"Ignatius condemns all those of that diocese (Ephesus) who did not assemble together in the church with the rest of the members thereof, to send up their prayers to God, as proud, self conceited, and justly condemnable."†

These surely must have been considered as church members, or they would not have been condemned, and yet they could not have been specially admitted, or the church would have compelled their attendance. Indeed, there is not a colour for the existence at that period, of two orders among the laity.

In the choice of bishops, all the people of the diocese met and voted in the election. "All the brethren met together in the church to choose a successor to Auterus, where *all the people* unanimously chose Fabianus ; and on his death Cornelius was chosen bishop by the suffrage of the clergy and people ;" or as it is expressed in the original, "παντα λαον" and "Cleri ac plebis suffragio."‡

"In all ORDINATIONS, *all the people* were consulted, and none were admitted into holy orders without their approbation."§

Again, all the *inhabitants* were admitted to communion. Justin Martyr writes, "that on Sunday *all the inhabitants* both of city and country met together, where the lector, or reader, read some portion of the Holy Scriptures, and the bishop preached unto them, *administered the eucharist*, and sent by the deacons part of the consecrated elements to those who were absent."‖

From all the above passages, it seems, there was no distinction of classes among the laity ; they are either described as the *populus*, or *plebs*, or λαος, i. e. the people.

* Lord Chancellor King, pages 16, 17.

† Same work, p. 28.

‡ Apud Euseb. lib 6. cap. 28. Cyprian Epist. 67. p. 198. Same work of chancellor King, p. 33.

§ Cites Cyprian Epist. ad Clerum et populum, p. 76. King, p. 35.

‖ King, p. 42.

We shall hereafter consider the case of the catechumens, who were not christians, but only candidates for baptism.

We are well aware that an objection may be here stated, that "the people, the brethren, the inhabitants, the plebs, populus, or Laos," may be intended, in all these examples, to mean the *church members* of the laity, in contradistinction to the clergy; but we feel ourselves at no loss for an answer to this objection.

The first answer is, that those who claim a special privilege and rank, and exclusive powers and authority, are bound to shew their title by *express terms in holy writ*, or in failure of that, (which we well know from our own researches, they cannot furnish,) they are bound to prove that such was the practice of the *primitive churches*.

Prescription they *cannot* set up, not only because the reformation expressly proceeded on the wise ground, that no prescription can sanction error and abuses, directly in face of revelation, and because our very congregational church itself is either schismatic, or else lapse of time and uninterrupted usage are of no authority; but for a much better, more conclusive and unanswerable reason, that *all the churches* in Christendom, except *our own*, and one or two others, have wholly excluded the *laity* from any participation in ecclesiastical affairs, and know nothing about *churchmembers*. Do the *laity* elect the bishop of Rome, or any other catholic bishop? Do the *laity* have a voice in the election of the English bishops? Or of the Greek bishops? No; it is well known they have not. If then for 1500 years, the sound and well settled republican principles as to church government, adopted and practiced upon in the apostolic ages, and those which immediately succeeded them, have, by a common consent of usurpation, been set aside, what prescription have we, except that which may be derived from the practice of the congregational churches for the last 200 years? And are we sure that the first congregational reformers went back fully to the primitive simplicity of the early churches?

This is the question, and we think it perfectly open to discussion; the more so, because we know they had their weaknesses and their strong leaning towards intolerance. The independent clergy had enjoyed power too long under the church of England, to be willing to surrender it wholly. It is a lamentable proof of human weakness, but it is true, that there were few men who had a greater desire of power, or who exercised it with less scruple or less moderation, than the early presbyters and elders of the congregational church, in our country. They governed the *state* as well as the *church;* and for some time none but

church members were eligible to any considerable office. As the power of the clergy was almost absolute in the *church*, so it was their interest, that the *church* should have absolute power over the congregation.

We do not mean to deny their great purity and piety; but they had mistaken views of religion, and it is notorious, that we, of this age, could not tolerate for one week, the discipline, the officious intermeddling in civil concerns, and the pious despotism, of the first pastors of this country.—We have not therefore, any thing like uninterrupted usage, as to the powers of the *Lay members of the church*. From the 4th to the 17th century they were slaves to a domineering clergy; and surely the heterogeneous sects, and practices since the reformation, are no sufficient authority against scriptural doctrines and the practice of the early church.

But we are not content to rest the question on the ground, that the right set up by the present church communicants to the exclusive government of the church, ought to be proved by those, who claim it, in as much as it is in derogation of christian liberty. We mean to show the opposite opinion to be true. Lord Chancellor King, so highly and justly praised by the author of this pamphlet, in answer to the question, Who were church members in the primitive churches? says, "in general all those that were *baptized* were looked upon as members of the church, and had a right to all the privileges thereof."*

Most of the converts to christianity were adults, and they were obliged to undergo a novitiate, during which they were called Catechumens, were catechized and instructed. They were seated by themselves, and were not permitted to hear the whole service; but as soon as they were *baptized*, they tarried at the celebration of the Eucharist. "When they were baptized, they commenced members of the *church universal*, and of *that particular church* wherein they were so baptized,† and became actual sharers and exerters of all the privileges and powers of the faithful."‡

Is there any evidence, that, in the apostolic age, any person, who had been *once* baptized, ever became afterwards a Catechumen—or was by any special form, made one of the brotherhood?

* Cites Cypr. Epist. 63, Sec. 5.

† This is a complete reply to the sneer of the author of the pamphlet in review, at a question of one of the Reverend Council, who asked "How many churches are there of our Lord?" Meaning to intimate, that admission to one ought to be an admission to all, as there was in effect but one christian church.

‡ Lord Chan. King. p. 103.

Were the three thousand that were baptized by Peter in one day, ever formally admitted to the church afterwards? Are not the "believers"—the "baptized"—and the "brethren" used throughout the Scriptures as synonymous terms?

Is there any trace of the formal *admission to the church* of the children of believers, who had been baptized? It was not unfrequent, that a man being converted, he and all his household were baptized at once. Is there any ground to believe that such persons were ever after formally admitted to the church?

We put these questions, because we know how they must be answered, and because they shew the nature of the usurpation which has been attempted in the christian church.

It is well known, that after the first three or four centuries, the laity lost all their privileges in the church, except that of partaking of the ordinances, and even that was granted or withheld at the pleasure of the officers. This usurpation has endured to this day in the Latin and Greek churches, that is, in three quarters of all Christendom. It still continues in the English Episcopal church, and partially, and indeed substantially so, in the Scotch presbyterian.

So that, instead of an uninterrupted succession of churches, in the sense in which that word is used by the congregationalists, the *church in our technical sense* never had an existence, till the separation of the independents from the presbyterians in the seventeenth century. It is in religion, *an infant innovation*—and our records, yes, the very authorities cited by the work under review, and others, which we shall cite, prove incontestably, that from its birth to this hour, it has been the constant subject of contest. It never would have been admitted for a moment, as a principle, that the church was a distinct body, with coequal powers, not only the rival of the christian society at large, but having a complete veto on their acts, if it had not been, that the politic union of church and state, which the New England puritans copied from their friends, the parliamentary christians, made it necessary for ambition to play the hypocrite and enter the pale of the church, so that the majority of the people and the majority of the church were synonymous, or at least, were the same persons; but as soon as this ceased to be the case, quarrels arose, and there has been an incessant struggle on the part of the laity, to reacquire the privileges of which they were deprived—to regain the powers which in the early ages all the people enjoyed, and the rights of nature and of conscience—in other words to consider the congregation *the church*, in the primitive and scriptural sense.

We do not mean to intimate, that it is not praiseworthy to form within christian societies special associations for the mutual en-

couragement of each other in the christian work. We believe them to be of great use. They are some checks on human passions, some aid to human weakness. Those who have made a more open and public profession of their design to devote themselves to God and religion, will feel under stronger obligation to be circumspect. Subordinate motives may help to restrain from open sin, and thus even human weakness may be made subservient to its strength. It is not the only case, in which, by the wise constitution of our intellectual and moral natures, even our weakness and passions, which if indulged would be our destruction, are converted into the means of our preservation and improvement.

Nor do we mean to say, that it may not be useful to have some form of introduction to the participation of the Eucharist. There ought to be some mode of ascertaining the fitness of the communicant for the participation of so solemn and affecting a rite. But the table of our Lord should not be surrounded with brambles, and thorns, and nettles. The entrance to it should be wide, and open, and inviting. Still all this part of the institution should be considered wholly as of a religious character, and as conferring no privileges, no power, distinct from the great mass of worshipping christians.

The truth is, that although this new association called a "church," first introduced by the independents, and utterly unknown in the primitive church, is assuredly lawful, because not forbidden in scripture; yet it becomes unlawful when it is perverted to the purposes of acquiring power, or is used for the gratification of human passions. This it must be liable to, so long as it is placed in the jealous light of a claimant of exclusive privileges, with the sole power of admission of members into its own body. Indeed there is a very curious and unfortunate suggestion of the writer, whose work we are reviewing—which is, that when the church is small, the remedy is easy for the discontented by joining the church to command or acquire a majority.

And indeed it is true, that this horrible remedy might have been resorted to in this case, if the advocates for Mr. Lamson had been as unprincipled as this writer represents them. A competent number might have joined the church, and thus have secured the vote of that body. But we call it a *horrible remedy*, because it is dreadful to combine specific party or personal objects, with so solemn a ceremony, as the entering into a special covenant to walk more circumspectly in the way which leads to eternal life, than the general mass of christians too frequently do.

We consider then, "the church," as it is now constituted, a holy, lawful and praiseworthy association *of a character purely*

spiritual; and that its ends and designs may be the more effectually attained, it is very important that its members should not enjoy temporal power, nor be by possibility engaged in worldly disputes. Their power and influence in the proper church of Christ, the christian society in which they worship, must be considerable—must be greater than that of any individuals; they will have their own votes, and will enjoy as much power as the saints did in the primitive churches; they will moreover enjoy an advantage which the latter did not; they will be a separate corps, and will carry into the meetings of the society an esprit du corps, a feeling of the interests of their order, and will act with more concert. Surely this influence is enough for the professors of a religion which teaches humility.

Could it even be proved, that in the early ages of the church, when it was, (as all christian societies should be,) purely democratical, no persons were admitted to the "church" without entering into a special covenant, and that, to that body alone pertained all christian powers and privileges; it would by no means follow, that such a course is necessary in the present age. When the greater part of the world was heathen, and men had been brought up either in the doctrines of the heathen mythology or in those of the Jewish dispensation, it might have been proper to require a distinct declaration and positive proof of the conversion and sincerity of the individual; but in an age like the present, in which christianity in civilized countries, is admitted by all to be the only true religion, there is no reason for requiring any other proofs of a man's belief in it, than his attendance on its ordinances and worship, his support of it by his talents, and property, and a christian deportment. This is quite enough, at least for all the purposes of election and ecclesiastical power; it is certainly sufficient to authorize their claim to *choose their teachers and pastors.*

We have said, and we conscientiously believe it, that a "church" in the modern sense, an order of laity distinct from the general mass of believers, originated in the seventeenth century, and that its assumption to rule the affairs of the church has been constantly disputed, and often fluctuating.—We now proceed to the proof of it.

From the year 1630, in which Boston was settled, and Massachusetts assumed a character as a sovereign state, under the King, to the year 1648, the principles of church government were not settled. The synod of 1648 proves this fact. It was assembled solely with the view of settling, not points of doctrine, but church discipline. It is, we think, very disingenuously concealed by the author of the "Statement," that this famous platform itself met

with great opposition at the time. Even at that day, when every member of the general court was a *church member*, men shrunk back from the proposition of making the church so truly aristocratical—and it was not till after a new synod had been convened, it was not till thirty-two years after their adoption of the Platform, that it was *approved*, and not even then made a law by the Legislature.

In 1692, only 12 years after the adoption of the Platform, so much dissatisfaction prevailed, that the Legislature repealed the most important part of it, and vested the choice of Pastors, in the *major part of the inhabitants of each town*. This is precisely the footing on which it ought to stand, and for which we now contend. It is at any rate an illustrious struggle for the general freedom of christians, and is an interruption of the doctrine of prescription and perpetual succession.

The clergy and church, (or rather some of them, for there was always a formidable party for more liberal opinions) rallied, and the next year restored the church, (the narrow church in our view) to its usurped powers, but required the *concurrence of the people in the choice*. And why should the people be parties at all if they were not truly christians, and if truly christians why should they not have *equal* powers? We answer, for the same, and for no better reason than that, in all France, Italy, or Spain, or even in England, i. e. within the national establishment, the people have *no* participation in choosing their most important teachers—that the church think they can judge better—that it is a source of power and influence, which men never yield without compulsion. Flushed with their success, the church party in 1695 hazarded the bold measure of transferring the whole power of election to the church and to an ecclesiastical council. Even our author acknowledges, that he would never wish to see this law *revived*—and that he does not know how far it was *ever* acted upon. We can tell him, that it was never in any single case attempted to be enforced; and we regret it most deeply. The surest course for relief from usurpation is its being felt in all its power, and long ere this, had the act of 1695 been enforced, the christian inhabitants of this state would have been restored to all their rights as granted, or rather admitted and recognized, by the act of 1692. Can there be a stronger proof of this act being contrary to the just principles of christian freedom, than its having, in such an age, fallen entirely dead from the legislative press?

From 1695 when this dead born act was passed, to the time of the making of our constitution, the practice of churches and parishes appears to have proceeded generally on the principle of the act of 1693, that is, with the exercise of coequal powers by

church and parish—often, however, resisted and opposed, and producing frequent appeals and disputes. But the church exercised its assumed power with delicacy, and in most cases yielded to the wishes of the parish.

Little can be inferred from acquiescence in such cases. Supposed right on one side, induces the other party to yield something. Conscious defect of title, and the odium of exerting a power so opposed to all the feelings and principles of our government induced the other party to forbear a direct opposition to the public will. Elections of pastors became a matter of compromise. But upon the adoption of our constitution, it became necessary that principles should be settled. It is therein expressly provided, that *religious societies*, not churches, should have the right to choose their *own teachers*. All the laws heretofore subsisting must yield to this sovereign authority, and all the power that has since been tacitly conceded to the "church" by the "society," has been one of courtesy—a courtesy certainly commendable—a courtesy to be preserved as long as the church do not manifest a disposition to thwart the wishes of the society.

Since the adoption of the constitution, the absolute right in the last resort is vested in the christian society,—the parish,—the congregation,—the great mass of christian worshippers. The expressions of the learned Judge Sedgwick and Chief Justice Parsons imply no more than this—"The churches are very useful and respectable establishments—they were dear to our ancestors. Indulge them in giving their voice—let the church have its influence—let its members, if they choose, for they exercise a double power, (an anomaly in a civil or ecclesiastical republic,) of voting in two capacities, vote as a body, and as members of the society at large. Agree with them if you can, but if you cannot, the ultimate power resides with the parish."

This then is the pretended uninterrupted usage of which so much is said. An assumption, denied and taken away twelve years after it was sanctioned, altered and modified from time to time, and finally wholly withdrawn by the people at the time of forming their constitution, and restored to the state in which it stood in the primitive church.

We have hitherto exhibited very little of our author, for reasons already given. A few passages however require to be particularly remarked upon.

He asserts, that, "during the three first centuries of the christian era, and until that religion was patronized by the civil power, *none could have the appellation of christians*, but those who turned from *paganism*, *and openly and individually professed* their faith." page 26.

Now if this were true, our reasoning would be entirely overthrown; but it is notoriously opposed to the facts, and scarcely less than absurd. What, let us ask, was the state of those children still under age, who were baptized by the Apostles, when their parents were converted? Were they not called christians? And what was the condition of the nine generations descended from the first converted christians during the three first ages? Were they not called christians, and admitted to baptism without going through the novitiate of Catechumens? Or will this infallible author contend, that the christians had no children for the first three hundred years? Children of believing parents were entitled to baptism of *right*, and were always in common parlance, in the Epistles of the fathers, and of the Apostles, considered as part of the "christian society."

"Baptism was always precedent to the Lord's Supper, and none were admitted to receive the Eucharist till baptized."*

"*Children* received the Eucharist in the primitive church, which is so well known, that I shall only urge a passage of Cyprian, where he tells a long story of a sucking girl, who so violently refused to taste the sacramental wine, that the Deacon was obliged forcibly to open her lips and pour it down."†

How could any one, with Chancellor Kings's book in his hand, write a sentence so unfounded as the one above quoted?

We may assert then, that the children of believing parents were entitled to baptism and after baptism were church members; and of course that the "Πας λαος," the "plebs," the "populus," above quoted, meant the whole christian society, which was synonymous with "church," and equally so with "parish."

The persons, therefore, who called the council to ordain Mr. Lamson, were the scriptural church.

In the year 1668, our author says, a declaratory act was passed by the general court, explanatory of a former one, by which it "was enacted and declared, that by the church is meant such as are *in full communion* only."

Did it not occur to him, that for thirty-five years after the first act there must have been some contest and some doubt, else why this explanatory act? And further, that if by the "church" in primitive times, was meant all christians, or the great body of christian worshippers, and all baptized persons had a right to com-

* Cites Justin Martyr 2, page 97.

† De lapsis, § 20, p. 284. Ch. King's work, above, 2d part. 46.

munion, it was not in the power of the legislature to bind future churches, or religious societies, by any act to the contrary?

Our author talks much, and often of "imposing a pastor over a church against its own consent"—that "the church would be no longer free." "If one kind of man may be put over them, another may—one to whom they may have an aversion," &c.

No doubt, a parish might choose a Papist or a Mahometan—or a Jew; but there is no great danger of such a case, and it is not one of those evils against which wise men would guard. The radical error on which our author proceeds, is, that the church have not only other distinct, and separate rights and interests from those of the rest of their christian brethren, but that they are *hostile to each other*—that the parish, who are generally (taking the average of all the congregations of the state) about *four fifths* of the whole, have no concern about religion, are either infidels, or vicious, and that they will finally bring about the destruction of all religion. Such a pretence, on the face of it, is in the highest degree unjust and absurd. And if the state of all "churches" be as bad as the author of this pamphlet is pleased to represent that of the church in Dedham, making, in the whole, one fifth part of the members to be men of immoral lives and conversation, we cannot, from our more candid view of society, believe, that our holy religion would be in less safe keeping in the custody of the parish at large. Far be it from us to intimate that we place the smallest reliance on the slanderous imputations of this writer.

But it is not proposed by us to divest the members of the "church" of their rights—Let them vote with the parish—Let them exhort, persuade, and convince, if they can; but if they fail so to do, let them submit to the opinion and wishes of the majority, and endeavour to cultivate a kind, charitable, and conciliatory temper.

Much is said about the cruelty to the "church" in this and other cases. But it is forgotten that the "parish" have rights too, and that there is equal danger of cruelty to them. Indeed cases of infinitely greater hardship may occur. We might cite actual and existing ones, where the majority of a small church have succeeded in imposing a clergyman on a parish, against the decided wish of a large majority of the worshippers. Infinite intrigues, even the prostitution of the sacred covenant on entering into the church, may be the consequence of admitting, that a majority of one or two in the "church" can settle the important question of fixing a religious teacher for life.

The Middleborough case, to which this author alludes, is full of instruction, and pregnant with truths that are extremely important to the freedom of christians at large.

It is important, first, because the authority of the synod of 1648, and of the Cambridge Platform, was *never un*disputed in our country. Of this we have already given the history. Some churches adhered to a greater, and some to a less number of positions and parts of it. To some points of doctrine and discipline none of the churches, probably at any time, fully adhered. Thus it is doubted whether ruling elders have been chosen in most, if in any of the congregational churches, for more than a century.

Again, the church alone, both *elected* and *deposed* according to the Platform. and yet, though the Platform was ordered to be printed thirty-two years after its adoption, it is doubted whether there ever was a case since 1680 of an election and deposition by the church. There are many other parts, that have fallen into desuetude.

Secondly, because, if the Platform, though adopted at a synod, and ordered to be printed, has never been followed in *all* things, in *some not at all ;* it becomes a merely historical inquiry how far it has been adopted and practised upon, and at how early a period deviations took place. In this view the Middleborough case is important ;—and here let us remark, that it is only in controverted cases that the principles of law, civil or ecclesiastical, are settled. If there have been four hundred ordinations in which church and parish have concurred harmoniously, they prove nothing, but that the parish, having the same opinions, had no wish to dispute the pretensions of the church—but it ought not to be forgotten, that there has not been one election or deposition according to the Platform, that is, by the church alone, since 1692.

This Middleborough case embodies and shews forth in a strong light, the merciless abuses to which a parish may be subjected by a capricious, intriguing brotherhood, only because they had a majority of one or two in a body that constituted only a fifth of a town or precincts. In the year 1744, on the death of the Rev. William Thacher, pastor of the first church in Middleborough, a majority of the church members having become "new lights," as they were then called, and thus quitted the opinions of the majority of the congregation, were resolved not to settle any but an enthusiast of their own sentiments. They vexed the parish from May to the 9th of September with votes and resolutions. On that day the majority of the church, without consulting the parish, brought a clergyman of their own opinions, when they knew that the parish committee had provided one, and broke into the meeting house. Great disorder ensued, but the parish succeed-

ed, and politely invited the clergyman selected by the church to preach half the day.

The *parish* and minority of the "church," applied to a council for advice, and they recommended to the church to give way, and asserted it to be "the *custom of the several parishes*, when destitute of a minister, to supply the pulpit by a committee chosen by the *whole parish*."

Notwithstanding this, the church proceeded to call a minister of their own persuasion, and *actually ordained* him over a majority of the church! The book in our possession does not expressly state what was the nature of the remedy which the parish and church minority had against this usurpation. Yet it is almost necessarily to be inferred from it, that they did get relief, and settled a minister (as our author would say) by an *imposition on the church.*

This case is important, as it shews, 1st, To what abuses societies are liable by the fickleness, folly, or obstinacy, (as the case may be,) of a single able, influential church member. 2d, That councils *may* be called, and *will* convene at the request of other bodies than the "church." 3d, That as early as 1744 the *parishes* were in the enjoyment of their natural right of selecting whom they would hear, and of course what opinions they would prefer, and an ecclesiastical council recommended it as a good course. We believe that other societies in the state have been in the constant practice of uniting the church and noncommunicants, on all questions relating to the settlement of a minister.

We have now done with the "Statement," only observing in conclusion, that the spirit, certainly not a *christian* one, in which it is written, affords the best possible justification of the ordaining council, who perceived that reconcilement, entire reconcilement, could not be hoped for. We did intend to give some extracts which might justify us in this remark, and in the disapprobation we have occasionally expressed. But we think it best not to call up feelings by dwelling on a particular case, which might influence the judgment of readers in regard to the general principle, and which, for the honour of religion, we wish might sleep forever.

We turn with pleasure to Dr. Bancroft, who has expressed sentiments on this subject free from the spirit of party, and manifestly intended and calculated to spread the gospel, instead of maintaining the exclusive rights of a single body in christian churches.

"The gospel," he says, "contains few positive institutions. No definite rules are given by which to model the outward form of a church, or to adjust the public exercises of religion. In these res-

pects much is left to human discretion and convenience under the comprehensive rule,—Let all things be done in decency and order.

"Christianity was designed to be an *universal* religion. In its constitution and principles it is fitted for this purpose. Its author left nations and communities of men at liberty to adapt external forms to the state of society, to the nature of civil government, and to the general improvements of *particular* ages and countries.

"Overlooking this permission, in how many instances have ecclesiastics considered the *form* of a church, and the manner of the public exercises of religion, as an essential part of the christian system? On this subject deadly disputes have been raised. '*This* has been declared the only true church, and *that* denounced as having no title to the name.'

"Every christian society ought to guard their public institutions with circumspection, and take heed that no forms be introduced which are inconsistent with the principles of the gospel, or which may obstruct the promotion of its merciful design. What church has so far receded in its polity from the plan of the gospel as to have forfeited the name of christian? What communion is so corrupt in its exercises, that the honest and sincere worshipper in it will not be accepted by his Maker?

"Our ancestors in the first settlement of this country adopted the congregational system, and they early introduced the Cambridge Platform as their ecclesiastical constitution. But our ecclesiastical proceedings have *not been* marked with *uniformity*. The rights of the church and congregation have not been distinctly understood, nor exercised through succeeding ages by consistent principles."

He then proceeds to give a history of our churches conformable to that which we have endeavoured to display, and adds,

"Have our ecclesiastical proceedings been conformed to this state of things? Many appear to entertain vague views of the ecclesiastical relation of a minister with the *great body of his society*, and in some instances, churches have assumed a power in religious transactions, which is neither conformable to the civil regulations of the state, nor consistent with the principles of christian liberty. In many of our parishes, only a minor part of the serious members of the society are communicants. This neglect of a duty explicitly enjoined, is to be lamented, but the fact is undeniable."

He then proceeds to assign some probable reasons of the neglect of this duty, and adds,

"Shall we deny the christianity of those, who, from these causes, absent themselves from the table of our Lord, though they manifest a christian profession by supporting christian institutions, and by habitual attendance on the offices of public worship, and though their conversation be such as becometh the gospel? *I dare not.*

"What law of the gospel invests communicants as a *distinct* body, with exclusive privileges in the election of the minister of the chris-

tian society? The term, church, in the New Testament, is expressive not of a *distinct portion* of the christian society, but of the assembly of christians."

We have in these passages the sentiments of one of the most judicious of our divines in support of the doctrines of chancellor King, which we have endeavoured to lay before our readers.

Dr. Bancroft adds,

"It will, I believe, be conceded, that in primitive times the *whole christian community* was known as one body. In one united society they attended public worship, and joined in all the ordinances of the gospel. No distinction was *then* made between the sacrament of the supper and other christian rites. For at least 300 years, pastors were elected, and all ecclesiastical affairs managed by the assembly of christians, without distinction of *church and congregation.*"

Here then we find our opinions fully supported by one of an order most interested to maintain the power of the church, of which he is one of the heads. The day may arrive, (though it has not yet come,) in which a Massachusetts synod, whose powers however are only advisory, will so far modify the Cambridge Platform, always received with hesitation, and finally nearly obsolete, as to restore the churches of Christ to their original purity and simplicity. We congratulate the friends of christianity, that it has pleased God in these latter days to raise up able and upright men, who are disposed to complete the work of reformation, which our fathers, in an age of civil war and great darkness, began, but were not permitted to finish.

NOTES.

1. The synod of 1648, which formed the Platform, was even at that day regarded with jealousy. Hubbard, in his history, (and he was orthodox enough,) says that the synod was looked upon with a jealous eye, "because the main end was for an agreement of one uniform practice in all the churches to be commended to the general court, which seemed to give power either to the synod or the court (the authority of both of which in religious affairs they denied) to compel the churches to practise what shall be so established; but, being assured that the synod would have no authoritative power, the objections were withdrawn."—Hubbard, 533.

"Still *many* of the churches could not swallow it, because they feared it was the intention to have ecclesiastical laws to bind the church."—Idem.

Many further quotations on this topic could be made to the same effect, but we have exceeded very greatly our proposed

limits. Many of these quotations may be found in the notes subjoined to "An Inquiry into the right to change the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts." Published by Wells and Lilly, 1816.

II. There is one representation of the author of the statement on the Dedham ordination, which we choose to set apart as pre-eminent in its injustice and want of truth. Referring to the second ex parte council, called by 18 persons of the "church" in Dedham, the author says, "We are authorized to say that they (the council) had *but one opinion* as to the irregularity and inexpediency of Mr. Lamson's ordination."

It is obvious, that as *eight members* of that council *voted against the result*, this assertion could only be founded on *private* declarations of the dissenters. Now we undertake to say, that this is wholly untrue, and that those who dissented neither expressed nor entertained any such opinion. Our authority is derived from those who have conversed with them, and they declare this representation to be utterly unfounded. It is precisely in character with all the other calumnious insinuations of this writer.

III. We have expressed a doubt as to the manner in which the case at Middleborough terminated. We have since ascertained that the parish succeeded in settling a minister against the will of the church. It is not a proof merely, as the author we are reviewing considers, that men will *violate the law*, but it is a proof that the law was *unsettled;* and to render this more certain, we will cite the case of the Brattle Street church in Boston, which, from its foundation, has asserted and maintained the rights for which we contend. In elections there has never been a distinction, for more than a century, between the church and the parish, or ordinary worshippers, and yet they have never been out of communion on account of their liberality. What names have we more venerable than those of Colman, Cooper, Thacher and Buckminster?

IV. This sentiment for which we have been contending, is not of recent date, and ought not to startle weak minds on account of its novelty.

Cotton Mather, in his Ratio Disciplinæ, more than a century ago, admits that the right claimed by the church was odious and offensive. He says, "though the law of the province about choosing and settling a minister be a very wholesome law, and has much of the gospel in it, yet, there *grows too much upon the inhabitants* who are *not yet* come into the communion, a disposition to supersede it and overrule it. *Many* people would not allow the church any privilege to *go before them* in the *choice of a pastor.* The clamour is, "*we* must *maintain him.*"

And we ask what more *reasonable* clamour? Especially if he had added the nobler, less mercenary, and probably the true ground,—"We must *hear* him, whether we like his opinions or not. Be he wise or foolish; illiterate or learned: teach he truth or falsehood, we must, during his life, be compelled to *hear* him." Is it strange that men have struggled for a century to recover this right? Or is it not rather strange, that from the incipient opposition to the arrogant pretensions of the church in 1710, we have never succeeded in getting the principle settled in our favour?

V. We had resolved not to extend our notes beyond those inserted above, yet having met with some ancient tracts published in New England, which fully confirm all the doctrines we have laid down, and have the additional value of puritanical authority, in support of those of the early fathers, and of chancellor King, we ought not to withhold them.

The first are taken from an *authoritative* work; (so far as authority can be given to a work in an age of imperfect light;) it is entitled "Propositions concerning the subject of Baptism, &c." by a synod of elders and messengers of churches in Massachusetts, in 1662; assembled by appointment of the general court, and by the general court recommended to the consideration of all the churches.

We cite it merely to shew, that our views with regard to those who are church members, and who were so considered in early times, conform to the ideas of the synod of 1662; fourteen years after the Platform.

They begin with this catholic sentiment, for maintaining which, the liberal clergy are now so often abused by the self-styled orthodox.

"That in matters of religion, not so much what *hath* been practised or held, as what *should* be, and what the *word of God prescribes* ought to be our inquiry or rule. The people in Nehemiah's time are commended for doing as they *found written in the law*, though *from the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day* the children of Israel *had not done so*. Neh. viii. 14. So in 2 Chron. xxx. 5. 26: 2 Kings xxiii. 21, 22. They did not tye themselves to former use and custom, but *to the rule* of God's *written word*, and so *should we*."

To the support of our doctrine, the synod cite Mr. Hooker. "Suppose a *whole congregation* should consist of such who were children to parents *now deceased*, who were confederate; their children were *true members* according to the rules of the gospel, by the profession of their *father's covenant*, THOUGH they *should*

not make any *personal* and *vocal* expression of their engagement as their fathers did." Hooker's Survey, part I, p. 48.

It would be impossible for us to dictate to the learned Hooker were he alive, words more apposite to our argument. And are we not all in this age the *children* of confederate parents?

But it may be said this extends to ONE generation only. No; "We maintain that the believing parent covenants and confesseth for himself and his *posterity*." Same author, part 3, p. 25.

Mr. Philips, speaking of a people made partakers of God's covenant, and *all the privileges outwardly* belonging thereto, saith, "Themselves and all that *ever* proceed from them, continue in the same state, parents and children successively, *so long as the Lord continues the course of his dispensation*." Philip's reply, p. 126.

Again, "A *company* became, or *are a church*, either by conversion, or *institution*, or by continuance of the same constituted churches successively by *propagation* of members who *are all born* in the church state, and belong unto the church, and *are* '*a church*' successively so long as God shall continue his dispensation, EVEN AS WELL and as FULLY AS THE FIRST." Same work of Philips, p. 145.

"Mr. Shepard, in defence of the nine positions, page 143, hath this expression," "concerning the infants of church members; they are subject to censures whensoever they offend the church, as others are;" and in 1649, in a letter to a friend, he says, "concerning the *membership* of children, which he proveth by sundry arguments, *that they are members*, and sheweth at large what great good there is in children's membership. In which discourses he asserteth, that as they are members in their infancy, so *they continue* members when they are grown up *till* for their *wickedness they be cast out*."

This writer adds, what many would hardly dare to say even in this liberal age, "That there is *as much* danger (if not more) of the degenerating and apostatizing of *churches* gathered of *professing* believers, as of those that rise *out of the seed of such*."

How could our present system of exclusion, and aristocratical pretensions have grown up in a church, in which a synod, *after* the platform, published such scriptural truths? Is it not time to vindicate the rights of believers, and to remove the stumbling blocks which keep so many away from the table of our Lord?

"Mr. Prudden also is cited, as having written in 1651, three years after the Platform, "that the children of church members,

are members ;" which he supports by an abundance of argument and authority.

Mr. Nathl. Rogers, in a letter, 1652, says, "To the question concerning the children of church members, I have nothing to oppose, and I wonder any should deny them to be *members too.*"

From these authorities, which the synod cite as their justification, they conclude, "That it was the judgment of those *worthies* in their time, that the children of church members are *members of the church as well as their* parents, and do not cease to be members by becoming adult, until in some way of God they be cast out; and that they are subject to church discipline." It is true that there is an intimation, that though church members, they are required to own the covenant before they are admitted to a particular rite, the communion; yet this does not impair their civil or other ecclesiastical rights. They are *members* of the *church*, and have all the privileges of other members in the transaction of its affairs. If *subject to its discipline* they must be entitled to the exercise of its powers. To be *church* members, and yet *not* church members, would be an absurdity. This synod completely supports our doctrine, that the church, corporately considered, includes all professing christians, and their descendants. Hooker's authority first cited, is the fullest, and states explicitly, "that a *whole society*, (in which there is not a single man who has made a *personal and vocal* profession) but whose parents were in covenant, are true members of the church."

The question is therefore we conceive, at rest. It seems however that the doctrine of this synod was attacked by the Baptists, and was most elaborately defended in another tract by sundry elders of the synod of 1662.

This work has the fault of its age, of proving what no man could deny, and of believing that in the multitude of words there is wisdom. There is only one part we shall quote, because it puts an end to a possible objection, that might be started, that the descendants of church members could not exercise *all* the rights of church members without a *personal* engagement.

The Baptists pressed them with this difficulty; "If your *children* are *ipso facto members*, then if all the parents should die, *they*, the children, though *not expressly admitted*, be entitled to a *vote in church affairs;* which you *now* deny to them."

Our congregational ancestors were not puzzled or appalled at this objection. They boldly replied, as we contend at the present day. "But we say that this *second generation*, continuing in a *visible* profession of the covenant, faith, and religion of their fa-

thers, are a *true church* of *Christ*, though they have not yet made any *explicit personal expression* of their engagement as *their fathers did.*"

ARTICLE X.

A Sermon, exhibiting some of the principal doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, by which that Church is distinguished from other denominations of Christians; by WILLIAM EDWARD WYATT, A. M. Associate Minister of St. Paul's parish, and professor of Theology in the University of Maryland. Baltimore. Joseph Robinson. pp. 44.

Letters on the ministry, ritual, and doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church; addressed to the Rev. Wm. E. Wyatt, D. D. Associate Minister of St. Paul's parish, Baltimore, and Professor of Theology in the University of Maryland; in reply to "a Sermon exhibiting some of the principal doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States;" by JARED SPARKS, A. M. Minister of the First Independent Church of Baltimore. Baltimore, N. G. Maxwell. pp. 268.

SINCE Episcopacy sustained in 1763, the formidable assault of Dr. Mayhew, and to shield it, the rector of Cambridge and the archbishop of Canterbury interposed alike in vain, it has made no progress among us, such as could be satisfactory to its friends. The writings of that admirable man gave the alarm through New-England, and awoke the old congregational spirit. The measures of the English society* were disconcerted; and it was fain to turn again to the new settlers and the Indians, and leave the descendants of Puritans to take care of themselves. The revolution succeeding, of course did the cause of the English establishment no good; and the most important incident in its history, among us, since that time, is the separation from it, and open avowal of Unitarian sentiments, of one of the principal churches in its communion.

In other parts of the country it has been different. In New-York, the rich endowment of Trinity, and, of late, the exertions of an active individual, have given a currency to Episcopal peculiarities, and church has pursued log-house with no

* Our readers are aware that the writings of Dr. Mayhew referred to, were occasioned by the society established under king William, "for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts," having engaged in proselyting operations in New-England.

tardy pace, toward the savage frontier of the state. In Virginia, the generation of clergy, who, as Bishop White with beautiful simplicity relates, "continued to enjoy the glebes, without performing a single act of religious duty, except, perhaps, that of marriage,"* in course of time was extinct, and under the auspices of bishop Moore, a somewhat better day is understood to have begun. In Maryland, it was not surprising, that, pursued by the Catholics on the one side, and the Methodists on the other, many should be glad to find shelter in an establishment, in which superstition assumes a less repulsive shape, and discipline and pomp do something to keep out fanaticism. In Connecticut, the abuse of spiritual power has created an opposition, which has placed itself, as every wise political opposition will, under that organization which will make it most effective Almost every where, the church has been aided by the general prevalence of the spirit of inquiry, re-acting on those who do not feel this spirit. Encouraged as it is in the word of God, it is resisted by the indifference of most men on the subject of religion. Their dislike of trouble, they call love of peace; and when they are told that the articles of faith are but articles of union, that though the church seems authoritative and precise, yet after all, the church means nothing; and if they will not contradict, they may believe any thing, or not believe any thing, just as they will,—they are satisfied that the church is the place for them. From these causes, among others, it is no longer the insignificant body that it was, when nine clergymen and four laymen met in New-Brunswick, in 1784, and projected an American Episcopate. Bishop Hobart's visitations, we are told, are to more than an hundred parishes, and bishop Kemp's to nearly as many.

It is characteristic of this church, that its pretensions have always risen with its power. In England, a man cannot carry a pair of colours, till he has taken the sacrament according to the forms of the national church; nor can a dissenting clergyman solemnize a marriage. Among us, the clergy and members of this communion have always been regarded with a well-deserved respect and good-will, which, as yet, they have not endangered by challenging more. They have stood on the same ground with other denominations, recommending themselves by orderly Christian worship, and good Christian practice; but we suppose not one in an hundred of our readers ever heard the plea urged, of an exclusive right to the discharge of the sacred office being vested in their ministry. In the powerful diocese of Maryland, it seems, it is otherwise; and the readers of Dr. Wyatt's sermon in this age of sober sense and theological learning, have the trial

* Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church. p. 59.

appointed to them, of reading "that to the order of bishops alone, belongs the power of ordaining ministers; and that an ordination performed by the hands of a *priest*, deacon, or layman, or by any number of either, would be devoid of every degree of validity and efficacy, in conferring spiritual office and power." It is this lofty claim, which declares the most religious part of the country to be almost without a ministry, that makes the matter of the controversy. We, on our parts, make no objection to a clergyman that he has been ordained by a bishop, and wears a surplice; nor would we complain much, though he should kneel at the communion, and make the sign of the cross in baptism. But according to this writer, one to whom the instructions and ordinances of religion are dispensed by a minister, who has attained and discharges his office after a different manner, would as well, or better, not receive them at all. It is this arrogant pretension to a superiour and exclusive official right that we repel, and not the claim of churchmen to possess a regularly constituted ministry. We are content that their candidates for the sacred office should be ordained by one minister, though we would rather it should be by three or four. We ask but for a similar concession.

In this sermon of Dr. Wyatt, he is seen in so amiable a light, that we sympathize with him for having published it. It will do probably no good to his cause, and certainly none to his reputation. He appears in it (and except from this discourse we have no means of judging) to be a mild and conscientious man; and were it not, that we think it ought to be more considered than it is, that none but the well educated should undertake to guide the public mind on such subjects, we would not say, that we do not recollect to have seen a composition in such bad English, by an author who could affix to his name the insignia of a second degree in the arts. A sermon preached, deserves all indulgence. A controversial sermon printed, claims none.

The work of Mr. Sparks is the best which has appeared in this country, since the time of Chauncy, on the episcopal controversy. He had the advantage over Dr. Miller in not writing in Presbyterian fetters, and in possessing a learning, possibly not so various, (for he is a much younger man) but far better digested, more systematic, and accurate. The cause of letters owes much to this gentleman, and if it had not surrendered him to higher claims, would yet hope much more. In his removal, the University resigned a member on whose reputation and services it set a high value, and it was felt like the loss of a distinguished freeman to the literary republic of the east. Under his direction, the North American Re-

view made great progress towards that reputation, which has enabled it at last, (in conjunction with other publications to the same end,) to lower the tone of our trans-atlantic traducers, and to give itself no mean proof of the intellectual advances which it vindicates. From this flattering path to a wide reputation, and from the pursuit of favourite studies, he hesitated not to withdraw himself to the service of religion, and went with, to say the least, no elating prospects, to preach in a new field, the doctrines of uncorrupt Christianity. It is not therefore for the cause alone,—a little of personal feeling may excuseably have place,—that we are grateful for the issue of his exertions. Such has been their success, and the power and progress of just religious views, that in little more than a year since his ordination, the society is relieved from heavy pecuniary embarrassments; the odium which existed against it, has sensibly subsided; and it is now as respectable in point of numbers, as it is memorable for the stand it took in support of Christian liberty and truth. Unless we grossly miscalculate the impression which this work will produce, we shall think the exertions made to collect and establish that society, well requited by its having given rise to such a publication.

In his first letter, *on the ministry of the Episcopal church*, Mr. Sparks controverts the assumption, that "the Episcopal is the only true church; that its ministry originated with the apostles, and has descended down to the present time through an unbroken and divinely protected succession; and, that ordinations, performed by any other persons than bishops, are devoid of every degree of validity and efficacy in conferring spiritual office and power." He appeals in the first place, to the scripture evidence, and concludes his examination with the following statement.

"*First*, our Saviour left no instructions in regard to the nature or form of the ministry; he never spoke of three orders, or any number of orders; he gave no directions about the ceremony of ordination, nor did he assign the duty of performing it to any particular class of men. *Secondly*, the apostles said nothing of any number of orders in the ministry, nor have they left any rules or instructions on the subject of ordination. *Thirdly*, the first church at Jerusalem was governed by the apostles, elders, and brethren in concert. The apostles assumed no authority above the elders, nor the elders above the people. *Fourthly*, it is no where said in the whole New Testament, that the duty of conferring ordination was confined to any particular order of the ministry; but on the contrary, several examples are on record, which go to prove, that this ceremony was performed by any officer or officers of regular standing in the church. *Fifthly*, Timothy and Titus are never called bishops. Timothy is expressly called an *evangelist;* and the duties of Titus were such, as are usually assigned to an evangelist. *Sixthly*, the persons who were appoint-

ed by the apostles to assist in providing for the poor, and whom you call the 'seven deacons,' are never designated by this name in the scriptures. Their office was wholly of a temporal nature, and therefore could make no part of the ministry. *Seventhly*, the word *deacon* seems to have been applied at first as a general term, for a servant in the cause of the gospel, a minister, or teacher; and if it was afterwards appropriated to any particular office, no mention is made in the writings of the apostles respecting the nature or design of such an office. No instance is recorded, in which deacons, as officers of an exclusive character, are said to have taken a part in the government or concerns of any church. *Lastly*, the same reasons, by which you establish three orders in the ministry, would prove the existence of at least six or seven, as apostles, bishops, prophets, evangelists, elders, teachers, deacons." pp. 24—26.

One would think this were enough for a Protestant. But Mr. Sparks is too fair a disputant, and moreover defends too impregnable ground, not to be willing to allow every advantage to his adversary. He accordingly defers to Episcopal "fondness for the ancient fathers," so far as to go into an examination of their testimony, of which he gives the following summary.

"I have thus gone through with a patient examination of the evidence, on which the episcopal church advances its singular pretensions to a divine origin and succession. In the scriptures I have found nothing, either in the commands of our Saviour, or of the apostles, which can justify any class of men in assuming to themselves the claim of being the only true church.

"A similar result has followed from the testimony of the Fathers, and the history of the English reformation. *First*, it can be indisputably proved from the Fathers, that the churches in the primitive ages were not uniformly governed by three orders of ministry; but frequently by two, and sometimes by one. *Secondly*, bishops were parochial clergymen, in many places at least, and nothing more. *Thirdly*, ordinations were performed by presbyters, especially in the case of Irenæus, and for a long time in the church at Alexandria. *Fourthly*, no particular account can be given of the origin of the church of Rome, or of its first seven bishops. *Fifthly*, the power of the English clergy is confessedly derived from the king, and not from any church. *Sixthly*, the informality of ordination in the English church was such, in the opinion of the Catholics, who are supposed to constitute the true church, as to destroy all power, that might be transmitted by the episcopal succession. *Seventhly*, English bishops were at an early period consecrated by presbyters, and at a much later period, ordination by presbyters was considered valid. *Finally*, the consecration of archbishop Parker, who was the beginning of the succession since his time both to English and American bishops, was declared, and is still considered by the Catholics, invalid, and was at best of a very suspicious and doubtful character." pp. 45, 46.

We see not, how the arguments in this letter can fail to appear to any impartial person, decisive of the question. For our own parts, until some important error in them is pointed out,—which we apprehend cannot be,—we shall be quite content to have our ordination as regular as that of Barnabas and Paul, who were ordained by "certain prophets and teachers at Antioch."*

It seems to us, that there are not many things in church history which less admit of dispute, than the rise and establishment of episcopacy. The New Testament gives no hint of such a division of orders in the priesthood, that every person who assumes it must enter it either in a superior or subordinate capacity, nor does there any where appear to have been any other distinction among the early preachers of the faith, except what grew out of peculiar gifts, or out of circumstances, implying a peculiar fitness, and therefore authority, to teach, such as having been the immediate associate of our Lord or his apostles. The early preachers of our faith adopted the course which men of good sense, not to say men divinely inspired, might be expected to adopt. Wherever they formed a society of christians, they would naturally retain the instruction of the flock they had gathered, or if they left it, in pursuance of their commission to preach the gospel to all nations, their opinion would naturally be regarded in the selection of the person who should have charge of it, and the imposition of their hands with prayer, would seem an appropriate and solemn way of separating him to his office. As the number of christians in a place increased, convenience would demand the forming of new societies, and the head of the parent congregation might be expected to induct a new teacher, with formalities similar to those with which the first messenger introduced him. So far all would be obviously rational, and no more than we might expect would take place. But the idea that after the age of miracles, any, by right of being successors to the apostles in the highest order of the priesthood, could convey an authority resting solely with them to confer, is an invention of later times. It is not difficult to see how it originated, for it is

* We suggest to Mr. Sparks an argument, on which, in another edition, it might be well to enlarge. The authority to which the English church pretends, it claims to have received from the Romish. Now the power which makes, can unmake, and unless we mistake, the whole English hierarchy is yearly declared by the pope excommunicate. At any rate the consecration of archbishop Parker, to whom the English line is traced, was formally declared to be irregular and invalid. The arguments, therefore, by which the English clergy seek to prove that authority in the Romish church to which they refer their own, these self-same arguments, if they have any weight, prove the English clergy to be no priests, disowned as they are by the very power by which they claim to have been created.

no secret how early worldly passions began to nestle in the bosom of the church.* As congregations multiplied in a neighbourhood, the first who had brought the faith into it, or the first who had exercised a stated ministry, came to be regarded with a peculiar respect. Greater age, or superior rank, learning, or virtue, would elevate others above their associates; and humble as most of the early christians were, and difficult and dangerous as was the situation of all, distinction would be a demand for severer duty on one side, and the necessity of protection would lead to cheerful submission on the other. They who assumed the post of danger, claimed for their reward, or for the benefit of the rest, from selfishness, or from the apparent necessity of the case, that it should be also the post of dignity and rule; and while as yet distinction only gave a better chance of martyrdom, when there was no pomp to attract the ambitious, nor patronage to excite the worldly, there was no reason for contesting the claim, and whether formally or tacitly, it was readily allowed. When the church formed an alliance with the state, another condition of things succeeeded. The gradations which the universal temporary expediency had created, were for private advantage made permanent, and defended as such on the ground of right; and what had been but precedence in duty, trust, and danger, came to be claimed as superiority of office. Till a comparatively late period, however, the Romish, the most powerful church, can alone be considered as properly episcopal. The government of the Alexandrian approached near to the presbyterian form, and that of the church of Carthage to the congregational. Considering how early the christians became an important, though still an oppressed body, and how deeply-rooted and all-embracing a passion is the love of power, we are only surprised, that a system like the episcopal was not earlier organized. From that period, the history of episcopacy, is the history of Romish usurpation.†

* "I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, received us not." III John, v. 9.

† Doddridge's sensible and candid account of the rise and establishment of episcopacy may be seen, vol. ii. p. 352 of his Lectures. That of Jerome about the beginning of the 4th century, is this; "Till through the instinct of the devil there grew in the church factions, and among the people it began to be professed, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, churches were governed by the common advice of presbyters; but when every one began to reckon those whom himself had baptized, his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed in the whole world, that one, chosen out of the presbyters, should be placed over the rest, to whom all care of the church should belong, and so the seeds of schism be removed." To explain this simple historical statement in accordance with his own views, the bishop

We shall be asked how an institution, so pregnant with danger to the liberty of christians, was able, unless founded on scriptural authority, to survive the protestant reformation. The question is easily solved. The work of the reformation was of a magnitude and difficulty, of which at this period we are hardly able to form a tolerably just conception. Nothing less was to be done than to overturn the most dearly cherished prejudices of men, on a subject, which the sense of ages had declared it sacrilege to scrutinize. It was not to be expected that the *first* inquiries, bold as they were, should reach the conclusions of the *last;* that the first struggles of minds trained into deformity and feebleness by the worse than Chinese distortions of a Romish discipline, should show the vigour of a healthy growth. Rear an infant in manacles, he will be a cripple, though he be freed from them, when he becomes a man. There were abuses of more pressing enormity than this, which claimed the first attention of an awakened age. The papal was so galling a yoke, that the weight of the episcopal was scarcely felt; and bad as were the simoniacal practices of the time, they were not to be thought of, till a more crying sin, the sale of indulgences, was stifled. We ought not to be surprised (if it were only on this ground) that the pretensions of the episcopate were no earlier contested. But further; the best reformers, and those who saw this subject in its true light, were wise men; wise enough to know that the whole is often best secured by claiming at first only a part, and one design effected, and another put in a happy train by forbearance, when impatience would frustrate both. They did not care to expose such an enterprise as theirs to ill-timed risque, by disgusting any of its adherents, who, in the case of an amalgamation of orders, would lose the rank and revenues of princes. They did not forget, that in the gowned hosts

of Lincoln, (Elements of Theology, ii. 391,) employs the very hypothesis which the statement is made to discountenance. He argues that Jerome must have spoken in this passage of apostolic times, "because in another part of the same work he tells us, that James was made bishop of Jerusalem by the apostles, Timothy bishop of Ephesus, and Titus bishop of Crete, by St. Paul, and Polycarp bishop of Smyrna by St. John." If Jerome spoke here, as he is represented to have spoken, of diocesan and not parochial bishops, what churches in Ephesus and Crete, we would gladly learn, were those, which, before Timothy and Titus were sent to them, were "governed by the common advice of presbyters?" and in what part of the Acts of the Apostles is an account, or in what part of the epistles a hint, given of the passing of that decree, according to which this writer would have it, that Timothy and Titus were made diocesan bishops; passed as his hypothesis supposes it to have been, within the period to which the New Testament history relates. Were scripture, and all antiquity beside, silent on the subject, the writings of Jerome alone would prove the episcopal government to be an usurpation.

of Rome, they had aggressors, with whom such an organization as that of the hierarchy would enable them the better to contend; and as prudent men are wont to do in seasons of alarm, they resigned a portion of their rightful privileges to buy security for the rest. Perhaps some might even fear that the zeal for change would grow with the multitude as it was gratified, and so might prefer rather to endure some of what seemed to them the more tolerable abuses, than take the hazard of indulging a spirit which it might be difficult to check.

This would be explanation sufficient, if only pious and learned men had had the direction in those measures, which, taken altogether, are called the reformation in England. But we are not to forget that many were concerned in them, of whom learning is little predicable, and piety still less. Episcopacy, acquiesced in for a time by one description of men for reasons of expediency, was protected by another for reasons of state. The chief excellence which Henry VIII. saw in the opposition to the supremacy of the pope, was its transferring that supremacy from the pope to himself, and monopolizing as he was, it would have little met his views to resign the power of giving away mitres, palaces, and stalls. Queen Elizabeth, it is well known, reproached herself for having given so much aid to the reformation;* and her pedant cousin, though he had declared to his Scottish parliament, that "he minded not to bring in Papistical or Anglicane bishops," had learned five years after, at the conference at Hampton court, to utter with the positiveness of an oracle, and the emphasis of a monarch, the maxim, *no bishop, no king*. This maxim uttered by the source of all law, it was no safe thing, in touching the lawn, virtually to assail the crown; and willing as the reformers might be to be martyrs, it was less creditable at least to go to the gallows for high treason, than to the stake for denying the real presence. Thus the episcopal power rested too firmly on the civil for plebeian hands to raze it. It still stands on the foundation of the lords and commons of England,

* Neal says (Hist. of Puritans, i. 192.) that except by the English language, the service in her chapel could not be distinguished from the popish. One of her chaplains on Good Friday spoke in favour of the real presence, and she openly gave him thanks for his pains and piety. The dean of St. Pauls, in a sermon at court, spoke with dislike of the sign of the cross, and she bid him desist from that ungodly digression, and return to his text. (Do. i. 206.) She "loved magnificence in religion," says Burnet "as she affected it in all other things. This made her inclined to keep images still in churches, and that the Popish party might be offended as little as was possible, she intended to have the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament defined in general terms, that might comprehend all sides." (Hist. Reform. Abr. p. 534.)

queen Elizabeth and lord chancellor Hyde being the chief corner stones.

These things considered, it is really matter of surprise that just views of this abuse were so early entertained, and to such extent; and that so considerable efforts were made to correct it. That first and most illustrious reformer Wickliffe, denied the distinction of priest and bishop. "One thing," says he, "I boldly assert, that in the primitive church, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient, viz. priest and deacon; and I do also say that in the time of Paul, a priest and a bishop were one and the same; for in those times the distinct orders of pope, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, officials, and deans were not invented." To the 10th of the questions proposed by Henry VIII. to his prelates, *whether bishops or priests were first*, the archbishop of Canterbury replies; "the bishops and priests were at one time and were no two things; but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion;" and others of his coadjutors agree with him in sense. The king's book* declares "of these two orders only, that is to say, priests and deacons, scripture maketh express mention, and how they were conferred by the apostles by prayer and imposition of hands." The pretension to a divine right of episcopacy seems indeed to have been first started in England by Dr. Bancroft, in 1588. The doctrine was then so new even to high churchmen, that Whitgift,† than whom no man was more tenacious of church authority, said he rather wished than believed it to be true. Archbishop Usher, bishop Burnet, and indeed most of the more learned and moderate reformers, from the beginning of the reformation till the final check was put to it under Charles II. either denied or doubted the distinction between the orders of bishop and priest. What is very remarkable is, that in the very articles of that church, which now asserts this distinction of orders to be so vital to its constitution, this distinction is entirely overlooked in that part‡ which treats of the

* This book was published in 1543, and was entitled; "A necessary erudition for a christian man." It was drawn up by a committee of bishops and divines, and was afterwards read and approved by the lords spiritual and temporal, and the lower house of parliament, and corrected by the king's own hand. (Neal's Hist. i. 79.)

† Says Whitgift, as quoted by How against Miller, p. 46; "There is no certain form of church government or discipline prescribed to the church, but the same may be altered as the profit of the churches requires. I do deny that the scriptures do set down any one certain kind of government in the church to be perpetual for all times, places and persons, without alteration."

‡ The article, Art. 23d, runs thus; "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments

institution of ministers to their office, so doubtful a thing was the permanency of the existing organization thought to be. The divine right, (said Mr. Henderson in 1646, to the king, in the name of the clergy of Britain) "was not pleaded till of late by some few;" and in that year the hierarchy was abolished by act of parliament, the same authority by which it is now upheld. The christian liberty, thus recovered for a little season in England, had amidst the deluge of Romish impiety, been preserved, as in an ark, in the vallies of Piedmont, by a faithful sect, the Waldenses, who from the time of pope Sylvester, A. D. 316, at the latest, are known as a distinct community, and perhaps existed as such from the time of the apostles. It may appear from what we have stated, how singularly inaccurate is the assertion of Dr. Wyatt, in the sense which he attaches to the words *authorized ministry*, that "through the darkest days of the christian church, while so many other tenets became perverted or disguised, few ventured to assail, and none succeeded in setting aside, the authorized ministry of the church of Christ."

But another question will occur. Granting, it will be said, with the best of the early reformers, with the most judicious writers of later times in the English communion, such, for example, as King,* Chillingworth, Hoadly, Hammond, Paley,† Prettyman and Locke, and (as we suppose we may be permitted to say) with the mass of churchmen in this country, that episcopacy is not a divine institution, why should we not also agree with them, that it ought to be acquiesced in and vindicated as

in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

Such a studied indistinctness on a matter of such moment speaks for itself. How it appeared to one qualified in every respect to judge, may be inferred from the remark of Burnet, as quoted by Tomline, ii. 379, "They left this matter open and at large for such accidents as have happened, and such as might still happen."

* By some inadvertency the inquiry into the constitution of the primitive church is ascribed in Mr. Sparks's work to archbishop King. The author was *the chancellor*, Sir Peter King.

† Paley reasons in favour of episcopacy, that it promotes good order, affords to men of all ranks religious instructers on a level with themselves, gives respectability to the priesthood, and offers prizes to exertion. He calls the gradations of clerical rank "rules of the society, rather than laws of the religion," and declares that "christianity may be professed under any form of church government."

conducive to religious order?* This question deserves a fair consideration; for whatever form of church polity will best protect and give efficacy to religious institutions, has a claim to the preference and support of christians.

Admitting, for the sake of the argument, that the system of ecclesiastical polity existing in the church of England, is of the wisest contrivance, there are other considerations to be attended to, before any one can attach himself to its communion. It is not recommendation sufficient to a society, that its government is so constructed as to be powerful, unless the laws are also good and well administered; and let a man be ever so well satisfied, that the structure of a church government is such as to make it efficient, it still remains for his consideration, whether this is not overbalanced by its being oppressively exercised. If tests contrary to liberty of conscience are imposed, if assent to false articles of faith is exacted, or even if the authorized form of worship involves doctrines disbelieved or disputed, if it tends to superstition, or does not tend in the highest degree to edification, the government strong enough to protect such abuses is only the more to be avoided and condemned. To him who believes that it makes undue claims, it is a despotism; and he is bound none the less to seek his christian liberty, because he admires the organization which oppresses him. Whether any such objection lies against the English church will be seen from our remarks on its articles and ritual.

We do not doubt that the episcopal form of polity is well adapted to maintain itself. It is well arranged and balanced to enlist and direct many strong human feelings; and we entered fully into the sentiment of an episcopal friend, who once expressed to us his admiration of a mechanism, which could work to such effect, when there was so little ability to direct its movements. But the true question is, is it strong to do right, and weak to do wrong. We grant that it makes dissent from certain obscure doctrines inconvenient, and dissatisfaction with certain arbitrary forms vexatious; but we believe we shall say without contradiction, that in no other denomination of christians is discipline in so low a state. We do not allude to such abuses as the absence of a large proportion of the clergy from their cures in England, where the same place is one of great hardship to him who does the duty, and in reality a sinecure to him who receives the emo-

* An argument which may seem scarcely to correspond to the dignity of the subject, is used by Hey on Art. 23d. "If ministers be self ordained,—how can it be brought about that certain appearances, modes of dress and behaviour, shall be so associated with piety and virtue, as instantly to produce good feelings in the mind."

luments, because it is not perhaps the ecclesiastical system, but the characters of the bishops which are answerable for this, and in our country we know nothing to the contrary of the episcopal superintendence being impartially and vigilantly exercised. But we speak of evils belonging to the system. It is with these only we have to do; for in this country, in many instances we are sure, and in most we believe, the affairs of the church are conducted by conscientious men. We speak of the control over communicants, the only spiritual authority which is now exercised. To take the lowest ground, it is certainly the right of the members of a christian church to protect its reputation, and to guard against scandal by refusing to any, but persons of good lives and conversation, a participation *with them* of christian ordinances. But instead of a good life and conversation, the condition of sharing in the most sacred act of christian fellowship, set forth in the formularies of a sect, which defines the church to be "a congregation of faithful persons," is the ability "to repeat the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and to answer to such other questions as in the short catechism are contained." A candidate who can stand this ordeal has a right to confirmation by the bishop, and the priest is liable to excommunication, if after this he refuse him the elements. In England an excommunicated person has an appeal to the chancellor, who is often a layman, and the decision of this officer is not subject to the review of the bishop. We need not say that we are not over much attached to narrow conditions of admission to christian privileges. But if there are to be any, let them be grounded on some evidence of desire to live a christian life, and not on the passport of a person who never saw the candidate, till he came to kneel under episcopal hands, and in all probability will never see him again.

Passing over many other objections which might be made, we cannot persuade ourselves that such a system is calculated to operate favourably on the character of the clergy. The highest order of them is placed in a situation of such influence and distinction, as to call no doubt for uncommon discipline of mind, to preserve that humility which becomes the servants of a meek and lowly Saviour. We doubt not (we say this in perfect sincerity) we doubt not, all precautions are taken against this tendency of the circumstances in which they find themselves placed. But agreeing with us, as all christian ministers must, that the prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is a prayer which becomes a christian, they will join us in lamenting the danger, though it

may appear to them overbalanced by other advantages.* Much of what belongs to the government of a diocese is moreover almost secular, so much so as to go very far towards justifying the English practice, which almost drops the character of the minister in the bishop. To the usefulness of the priest the system is no more propitious. He is under the same disadvantage with every other man who has a superior responsible for his conduct. If he is blamed, or blames himself for his remissness, he does not forget that the bishop as well as himself must answer for it, and by the division of the responsibleness, the power of conscience is weakened. The officiating clergy are partially at least relieved of dependence on those to whom their mal-administration is a wrong. If accused they must answer to one, whom, faithful as he may be to his trust, they may, if they have sufficient resources and address, find some other means to satisfy of their innocence, besides proving it, or whom at least they may influence in their favour by repelling specific accusations, when he has not the opportunity of frequent intercourse to learn how they fulfil those less determinate duties, by which the faithful or negligent discharge of an office is best made known. A bishopric in prospect is no aid to the usefulness of a priest. The acknowledged and official head of such a body as the clergy is necessarily a man of great consequence and power. The influence of one among the American bishops, we suppose, is not inferior to that of more than one other man in the United States. Such a situation cannot but be an object of desire to those who are in a condition to be raised to it; and to say nothing of the advantage both to shepherd and flock of the connexion between them being understood to be permanent, nor of the danger of sinking the clerical character in canvassing for preferment, in soliciting the powerful, making partisans of the low, and plotting against rivals,—we are not satisfied that any ambition, except that to discharge regularly laborious and responsible duties, can well have place in the mind of one engaged in the christian ministry. Once more; the same man will not make the best bishop and the best priest; and we should think this must be an injury to all in the subordinate rank, hoping, as it is at least possible all may, to be raised to the higher. We should fear, that in qualifying themselves for the office to which they are aspiring, they might regard less the qualifications

* If a churchman and a bishop is to be credited, this apprehension sometimes is realized. "I saw the generality of the bishops bartering their independence and the dignity of their order for the chance of a translation, and polluting gospel humility by the pride of prelacy." Watson's life. p. 62.

for the place they fill; that present usefulness might suffer by the chance of promotion.

But we need not enlarge on this subject, for if the system of episcopacy continues to subsist at all, it will be only by the credit which it may gain to its pretensions to a divine right. Good as it might be reckoned, it would soon be obsolete, if it attempted to exercise authority where it was considered as only a prudential institution. The first man who thought himself wronged by those in place under it, would secede. The first imagined abridgment of the christian liberty of an individual would create a schism, for no man would submit to what he thought an unjust exercise of an usurped authority. Those who maintain the expediency of this form of government, must, whatever they may think,—if they mean it shall continue,—must, if their consciences will suffer them, maintain its *jure divino* claim. It will stand on no narrower base; and when Locke and Paley sought to remove it to another, we are almost tempted to believe, that, friends to religious liberty as they were, they meant to take a step to demolish it, and chose the way which was at once the surest, and the least obnoxious, to accomplish their purpose.

Mr. Sparks' second letter is on *the ritual of the episcopal church.* He speaks of the use of forms of prayer in the following judicious and candid terms.

"Your remarks on the utility and expediency of forms of prayer are not without weight. If we ever give utterance to our feelings in chaste, appropriate, and solemn language, it should be in our addresses to the Deity. If we ever suppress the vain ambition of using lofty phrases, high sounding epithets, and an unnecessary abundance of words, it should be then. We cannot study too much to make our language simple, plain, forcible and direct. In those religious exercises in which large numbers unite, and where the prayers are intended to express the wants and petitions of the whole, there can certainly be no impropriety in using a preconceived form, composed in such general terms as to be adapted to a promiscuous assembly."

It is not pretended that the use of set forms of prayer is required in scripture, as essential to the fit performance of that duty; nor can those who approve forms, take in defence of them that favourite ground of antiquity, where ignorant and worldly ecclesiastics of the fourth and fifth centuries may be called in for allies. "Men had prayed to God," as Palmer remarks, "two thousand years before any books were written;" and extemporaneous prayer was habitually offered in the assemblies of the primitive christians. "They prayed," says Tertullian, "without any prompter except their own hearts." "The president,"

says Justin Martyr, "prayed according to his ability." Nor until the council of Milan, in the year 416, were forms authoritatively appointed by the church.

On the other hand, the lawfulness of the use of set forms is not denied, for those, who find them to conduce to the purposes of social worship. We need not therefore stop to consider what Dr. Wyatt could have meant by the words "the lawfulness of forms being then established *by a divine appointment*," any more than to ask how his remark, that "the book of Psalms was inspired by the Holy Ghost *for the use of the congregation*," is to be reconciled with the fact, (undisputed, as we have supposed, till now.) that many of the Psalms were composed on subjects of a personal nature; and suited as they are to excite devout sentiments, are, from their structure, as entirely unsuitable as one of the discourses of our Lord, or one of the epistles would be, to make a part in the devotions of an assembly of worshippers.

We are not aware of any prejudice on this subject, nor do we even regard it as of the first importance. We wish, as all christians must, that prayer should be offered in that manner, in which the purposes of devotion will be best accomplished. It is a thing of minor concern whether our petitions be offered in the words of others or our own; the object is that they be offered in the most solemn, reverend, and edifying manner. We are not blind to the advantages or defects of either of the different methods adopted in christian congregations; but after as fair an estimate as we are able to make of them, we cannot but regard prayers in a certain sense extemporaneous, as best fitted to accomplish the ends of public worship. They require in the clergy a useful discipline of heart and mind, a familiarity with scripture and with devotional thoughts. They require a peculiar culture of the affections, and at the time of offering them give an animation to the devout feelings, which tends much to the improvement, alike of the intellectual and religious character of the clergy, and by direct consequence of their power of usefulness. No doubt, that, except under circumstances of peculiar embarrassment, or except prevented by a constitutional diffidence, or want of fluency seldom found, the same person, after a proper course of preparation, may utter a more appropriate and fervent prayer in the church, than he can compose in the closet; because in retirement he is only preparing it to be offered, and it will almost unavoidably be marked by a rhetorical coldness; in the church he is really offering it, and under circumstances which can hardly fail, except under disadvantages such as have been named, to work up a mind of sensibility to a high pitch of devotional feeling. He is operated on by the associations of place, and by a sense of the solemni-

ty and interest of the occasion. His mind is awed by the unbroken silence, and at the same time led into the proper train and forced into strong action, by the presence of a multitude, whose devotions he is to present. He is at liberty to adapt his thanksgiving and petitions to the circumstances of those whose devotions he leads, and we suppose no one doubts, that our devotional feelings are most engaged by those prayers, which have the closest reference to our own condition. And to these reasons for preference of the congregational form of conducting public worship, which we conceive give the promise, that the prayers offered in christian assemblies will be in this way the best constructed for their purpose, we add, that the degree of variety of expression and of topics, which this method admits, is of use to excite and keep alive the devout feelings of the worshippers.

We are not insensible, however, to an inconvenience attending this method. It requires in the person who officiates, abilities and cultivation which may be dispensed with in him, who is only needed, to use the phrase of Dr. Mayhew, "to read prayers to God." And even the best qualified for the sacred office, are, at times, from languor of spirits and temporary decay of their powers, or from accidental embarrassment, from which a public assembly is no place to recover, in danger of paining their fellow-worshippers by a want of fluency or propriety in their addresses. We have no hesitation in admitting this difficulty to be real. But we have never seen or heard it stated except in what seem to us exaggerated terms. We have not found it to exist to any very serious extent. A man learns to pray as he learns to preach; and if he have considerable acquaintance with scripture, and right views of the nature of the service, we think he will be more likely, with the same talents and discipline, to offer the prayers of a christian assembly in a suitable manner, than to interest and profit them by his preaching. And if by chance, a moment's hesitation should occur, or an expression not the aptest possible escape him, it is not an occasion to call forth a captious criticism; or the taste, if offended, may look for its compensation to a moment of greater collectedness, and more raised devotional feeling. The inconvenience, we are satisfied, has been not so much experienced, as feared; and thus it has had the effect, which all christians must rejoice in, to draw the attention of christian societies to the gifts and piety of their clergy, and, in a considerable degree, to bar the places of public instruction against men of incompetent attainments or doubtful character.

This objection to extemporaneous prayer, as (inaccurately, we suppose, in general) it is called, is the only one to which we attach any sort of weight. We have heard it said, that it is hard

to follow a prayer which one hears for the first time, and confusing to have to consider before one adopts it for his own, whether it expresses his feelings, and is suitable for his use. We suspect the evil is nearly imaginary. The topics of prayer are from its nature limited; and ought to be, and to a great degree are, familiar. Every person has forms of expression, which in some degree belong to him, and are a guide to his meaning before the whole is uttered. Nor is every prayer offered in the church wholly different from all others. He who should seek to diversify his expressions to this extent, would be setting himself a task, painful to himself, and unprofitable to his people. And even at the worst, it is no very painful thing to keep the mind in suspense till the longest period, commonly used in prayer, is finished. But we may further reply, that the inconvenience, if it exist, furnishes no ground of preference for a form prescribed. For if it be hard to follow a prayer which one is using for the first time, it is next to impossible to follow a prayer which one has used times innumerable. Familiarity lulls attention to sleep; and if it can be roused, it is only by an effort which wholly engages the mind, and forbids it to be excited by the feelings which the occasion, unless such a narcotic were provided, would infallibly create. It is one of the good effects, we apprehend, of the assembling of christians together, that it invigorates and gives earnestness to the feelings of piety in all. And this ought to cause the common worship to be offered in a strain of warmer devotion. But a prescribed form of prayer forbids this. It can have little indulgence for the course into which circumstances may lead the thoughts and feelings of the worshippers. It offers them only the alternative of stepping aside from the train of their reflections, to repeat, with such interest as they are able to force, a form of words which, from use, has lost its power to excite,—or of indulging apart from the assembly, devout emotions of their own, which, if the tyrannical service did not forbid, would be kindled and confirmed by being expressed in prayer.

But we do not defend extemporaneous prayer. Without doubt, we would have a person who assumes the sacred office, made capable, by previous discipline, of offering a suitable thanksgiving or request in the name of other christians, for the blessings which any moment may unexpectedly bring or call for.* But on stated occasions we would not have him undertake to lead the public devotions, without much and serious preparation. We

* The episcopal historian of the presbyterians of England and Scotland in Charles II.'s time agrees to this; "Il y a quelques ministres capables qui sans le formulaire ordinaire font des prières pleines d'edification, et a cela tout ministre de l'évangile doit êtse preparé." Edit. 2d. p. 134.

would have him, before he ventures on so solemn an office, converse in solitude with religious thoughts; summon into his heart and mind every holy feeling, every grand and engaging conception of God, every inextinguishable "longing after immortality;" and work up his whole soul for the noblest act in which the soul of man engages. But when he has turned his thoughts and feelings into the proper channel, let him not dyke them in, and force them to stagnate there, but rather bid them roll on, and trust that mingling with the heart-offering of others, they will flow in a yet fuller tide. In this state of mind it is not probable that his fellow-worshippers will be tasked to understand his meaning, or embarrassed to decide whether it is applicable to themselves. Almost the least instructed man may be nearly sure in the utterance of deeply-felt devout emotions, to carry the sympathy of others with him. This state of feeling, he will find the warm and powerful language of scripture best fitted to express. And by the frequent use of scripture language, which is copious enough for almost any occasion which can occur, not only will the inconvenience named be guarded against,—for most who attend public worship are familiar enough with scripture to know when a sentence is begun what will follow,—but the great object is attained of having a worship in which all christians, whatever be their diversities of belief, can join; for interpret it as variously as they may, all allow the authority of scripture, and whatever is its language, they with full assent are willing to make the language of their prayers.

We have heard it as often as it is idly said, that in the congregational service the people can with no more propriety be said to pray, than they can be said to preach. If there is good sense in this, then public worship can only be properly conducted by the whole congregation speaking aloud, at once; then instead of offering prayers, as it has been commonly supposed to do, for various important blessings, through a considerable part of the Litany, the congregation does nothing but repeat, some fifteen or twenty times, "we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord;" and then, a great part of the English form might as well not deface the white paper of the service-book, for the prayers in it, with the single exception (as we believe) of the Lord's prayer, are repeated by the priest alone, and are only appropriated by the congregation to themselves by an expression of assent at the close.

We prefer then free prayer to the use of prescribed forms, because we do not see that the former is liable to any important objection, while the latter relieve the clergy of an useful task, are not capable of being accommodated so closely to circumstances as might be wished, and tend to deaden the spirit of de-

votion. We feel strongly with Dr. Wyatt, that "we have a sacred privilege and an awful duty, when we approach the throne of Jehovah; every thing therefore, which can tend to promote the most profound veneration, the most undivided attention, and the purest devotion, should be strictly adhered to;" and it is because we think thus, that we differ from him on the subject of a form. Other things being equal, we do not doubt that the best prayer will be that which is not composed till it is uttered; that he will most fitly offer the devotions of others, who is at the moment offering his own. It is when engaged in that service, that the sense of God's greatness, of our own unworthiness and dependence, is most powerfully felt. The mind is crowded with appropriate thoughts,—awed, elevated, and warmed at once,—and all those feelings called into strong exercise, which make up the spirit of prayer.* If the persons employed in the ministry are capable of being affected by such emotions, we would have them permitted to express such;† and we do believe that men who are able to preach, are

* Bishop Hall's expressions in correspondence with these views, used in controversy with Calamy and others in 1640, shew him to have been little acquainted with the views of men in power, or to have had little sympathy with them. "Far be it from me to dishearten any good christian from the use of conceived prayer in his private devotions, and upon occasion also in the public. I would hate to be guilty of pouring so much water upon the spirit, to which I would gladly add oil rather. No, let the full soul freely pour out itself in gracious expressions of its holy thoughts into the bosom of the Almighty; let both the sudden flashes of our quick ejaculations, and the constant flames of our more fixed conceptions, mount up from the altar of a zealous heart unto the throne of grace; and if there be some stops or soleeisms in the fervent utterance of our private wants, these are so far from being offensive, that they are the most pleasing music to the ears of that God unto whom our prayers come.—What I have professed concerning conceived prayers is that which I have ever allowed, ever practised, both *in private and public*. God is a free spirit, and so should ours be, in pouring out our voluntary devotions *upon all occasions*. Nothing hinders but that this liberty and a public liturgy should be good friends, and go hand in hand together; and whosoever would forcibly separate them, let them bear their own blame—the over rigorous pressing of the liturgy, to the justling out of preaching or *conceived prayers*, was never intended by the law makers, or moderate governors of the church."

† We are at a loss for the meaning of the framers of the liturgy, when in the office of institution they require the newly inducted minister to pray, "be ever with me in the performance of the duties of my ministry; in prayer to quicken my devotion, in praises to heighten my love and gratitude." On personal accounts, quickened devotion and heightened love and gratitude are fit objects of prayer to a christian minister, as well as to other christians, but they do nothing to assist him "in the performance of the duties of his ministry," which are named; for be his devotions ever so quickened or so dead, his love and gratitude ever so lively or so languid, the same form of *prayer and praises* must perforce be used.

able to pray. At the same time we do not forget, that for the want of interest and appropriateness in preconceived prayers, there is some compensation in their admitting of being cleared from any thing offensive or irrelevant; and where special precautions on this score are thought necessary, we would certainly have them used. We think that in the time of Edward VI., when a very small proportion of the clergy were fit to be trusted with the public worship or instruction, the better part did well to provide a book of homilies for them to preach from, and a service book for them to pray by, and wherever the same need is thought to exist, we hope that similar provision will be made to meet it.

We have stated our objections to forms in general. But we have yet graver charges against the episcopal book of common prayer. We object to it that,

I. It is a perpetual form. Men, all of whom have been in their graves more than an hundred, and some more than a thousand years, dictate the addresses of episcopalians at the throne of grace.* Since their time the habits of thinking and of expression are considerably changed,—and why, when on other occasions we are able to speak our own language, why confine us in this to the words of others, when if left to ourselves, we might fix on thoughts more interesting to us, or apprehend the same thoughts in a somewhat different shape or order, and clothe them in a somewhat different phraseology? It would only be more unreasonable to require us to transact our common affairs in the dialect of Chaucer. Doubtless the chief blessings, which we have to acknowledge or ask, are the same in all ages of the church; but it as certain, that it is the acknowledgment of distinguishing blessings, which gives the greatest life to devotion. Common air is more worth than the greatest worldly success; but for which of these is one likely to express the liveliest gratitude? It is nature to be more thankful for a favour which has a personal and appropriate value. The form of words, which is suitable alike for our use, and for that of men who lived from the fourth century to the seventeenth, has no special fitness for the use of either. To stand on common ground, we must leave that personal ground where the most fervent devotions would be offered.

Again; with the progress of scriptural knowledge, the sentiments entertained with regard to some points involved in the episcopal formularies, have experienced change. The mass of

* Occasional prayers are sometimes composed, but the substance of the book remains inviolably the same. *Permanet, et remanebit in omne immobilis ævum.*

episcopalians of the present day dissent in some particulars (unimportant they will say) from the sentiments of the authors and compilers of their service-book; and are compelled in the use of it to attach some new meaning to plain words, or abstract their attention from the public worship, where certain odious passages occur,—practising in either case a mental reservation, painful to themselves, and capable of being misconceived by others. On the other hand, to just the extent that they reverence the form in which they worship, they are tempted to profess or adopt a belief in some respects unscriptural; and piety, by this deplorable arrangement, is made to turn traitor to truth.

Nor is this all. The volume with which our earliest religious recollections are associated, and which we are told has guided the devotions of generations before us, is very apt to take a place in the mind which is due to holy scripture alone. Our admirable liturgy,—as the phrase is in episcopal pulpits,—is very apt to be as much venerated, and as confidently appealed to as the Bible, even by some by whom it is as little read; and we have heard it spoken of, in and out of church, in terms, which seem to us little applicable to any other book than that of inspiration. So great has been the influence of the feeling of which we speak, that the ritual which Blackstone* declared to have been preserved in the sixteenth century principally by the terror of penal laws, was pronounced by Paley in the eighteenth, to have such an authority, that only by the most spirited measures could necessary alterations be expected to be forced into it.† Nay, the word of God is by many not thought fit to go abroad without the book of common prayer by its side. Propose in some places, where the church is in power, to send but a few Bibles to the east

* Of the law, 1 Eliz. c. 2. enacting, that *if any person whatsoever shall—speak any thing in derogation, depraving, or despising of the book of common prayer, he shall forfeit—for the third offence all his goods and chattels, and suffer imprisonment for life*, Blackstone says, (Comm. vol iv. p. 51.) "These penalties were framed in the infancy of our present establishment, when the disciples of Rome and Geneva united in inveighing with the utmost bitterness against the English liturgy; and the terror of these laws proved a principal means, under providence, of preserving the purity as well as decency of our national worship."

† "As the man who attacks a flourishing establishment writes with a halter round his neck, few ever will be found to attempt alterations, but men of more spirit than prudence, of more sincerity than caution, of warm, eager and impetuous tempers; consequently if we are to wait for improvement till the cool, the calm, the discreet part of mankind begin it, till church governors solicit, or ministers of state propose it,—I will venture to pronounce that (without His interposition with whom nothing is impossible) we shall remain as we are till the 'renovation of all things.'"

or west, and the cry, ecclesia in periculo! is up. The scriptures and the service-book are brought out tied together,* and like the customers of the speculator in the story who dealt in commodities of various worth, the hungry for religious instruction must take both or neither.†

II. The English form of worship is substantially *one* form. Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, fast-days, feast-days, and saint-days, the whole year long and every year, it is almost all the same. 'Through all the changing scenes of life,' it plods resolutely on *the even tenor of its way.* Come a famine, an earthquake or a war; be a church in the garment of praise, or in the spirit of heaviness; let a pestilence depopulate a land, a fire lay a city in ashes, an insurrection threaten a state, or a despaired of victory preserve it,—when you would expect to hear only one loud burst of praise, or thrilling cry for mercy, the inflexible prayer-book claims all its due. The enthusiasm of the worshipper must be content to be checked in mid flight, while the minister begins at the beginning, and reads to the end, and then submit to vent itself in some preconstructed prayer (called appropriate) consisting of a score of lines. The whole round of every day topics must needs be gone regularly through, and only a corner left for the overwhelming calamity or the transporting success. Now all will admit, that the same sermon, preached thus often, with only a sentence or two varied to suit the time, would soon fail to sustain attention. Is there not equal cause to fear, that the same form of words, so often repeated in prayer, will unavoidably come to fall from the lips, and on the ear, without an answer at the heart? It is no reply to this to say, that the topics of prayer are things of permanent interest; for is not this the case too, we would ask, with the materials of pulpit discourse? Ought not a sermon to be made up of thoughts of

* The reference is to the part taken by bishop Marsh, and the high church party in England, with regard to the Bible Society. The sentiments advanced by them have not wanted distinguished advocates in this country.

An account of the English controversy may be found in the Eclectic Review, vol. 8. pp. 1209, et seq. and in the Christian Observer, vol. 11, pp. 173. 289. 392, et seq. Dr. Marsh laid down among other things, that respect for the liturgy is "diminished by the institution and operation of a Bible Society."

† The manner in which churchmen speak of their liturgy is sometimes to the last degree extraordinary. Dr. Mayhew quotes a Dr. Bearcroft, who in a sermon preached in 1744, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, congratulated his associates that "the word of God mightily grew and prevailed in New England *according to the liturgy of the church of England.*"

eternal and unchanging interest? The question is not whether the ideas are always alike important, but whether the words do not lose by use their property of being a vehicle of thought, and cease to suggest ideas, either these or any other.*

III. The episcopal form of worship is faulty in its general plan. This is a matter for every individual's judgment, and if any one is not struck by the fact at once, it is not such as admits of proof. The service seems to us to be broken up into too many and too minute parts, and thus to lose that connexion, which is a virtue in every kind of composition. We should think it much better if it were more consolidated, that there might be to a greater degree a mutual dependence and coherence of the parts, and the mind not be continually arrested on the current of its feelings by the forms of closing one prayer, and introducing another. As it is, if the numerous prayers contain each of them what belongs to a prayer, the repetition must be not a little tiresome; if not, they are defective in themselves.—The arrangement is not happy. No good reason appears why parts of the service should stand in the appointed order rather than another.—There is too much of it. With a little variety of topics and expression, it might keep alive attention a much longer time, but what is at once so long and so unalterable has not the power to do this. Yet so overlooked was this radical blemish, that one scrap of devotion is piled on another at the end of the litany, as if the only object were to draw it out to a given length. Repetitions and redundances, omissions and defects must be looked for in every human composition; but they are worth avoiding when they may be avoided, and certainly so obvious mismanagement need not

* An illustration of this may be drawn from what most persons perhaps experience with regard to the Lord's prayer The consequence of our familiarity with it from childhood, is, that it is only by an effort, and a strong one, that we can attach to its words the ideas for which they stand. We are never, perhaps, fully aware of its significance, and could a person be found who was unacquainted with it before, it would strike him, we doubt not, as possessing an eloquence and fulness of meaning, very partially perceptible by ourselves. In connexion with this subject we may remark, that when congregationalists, in attending on episcopal worship, imagine themselves impressed by the solemnity of the service, they would do well to consider whether it is not rather its novelty that impresses them; and whether all the while that it appears so striking to them, to whom it is new, it is not very fatiguing to the stated worshippers, to whom it is old. An unprejudiced churchman is as strongly affected by the simplicity of congregational worship, as a congregationalist by the pomp of episcopal; and both for the same reason, operating however not to the same degree on both,—that the ardour of devotional feeling ceases to be checked in them, by familiarity of the form of expressing it. There is a remark to this effect, if we mistake not, in some work of Mrs. Barbauld.

have had place, as that which introduces the Lord's prayer six times (as it may occur,) in the same service, and the Gloria Patri we know not how many.—The Psalms, containing as they do, the richest vein in the world of devotional thought and language, which wrought into the texture of the service would give it quite another character, are, by a most infelicitous disposition, transplanted into it in a mass, and with all their localities and personalities of meaning, appointed to be read in selections of whole chapters at once, by the whole array of worshippers. We are told that they are not used as part of the public prayer. We reply that they ought to be; and that we know no good reason, why they should be reserved from a use for which they seem almost designed, so fitted are they for all purposes of devotion, for another less definite use, in which, unskilfully applied to it as they are, they are very far less edifying.

IV. The episcopal service appears too formal to cherish the spirit of devotion, and too pompous to be a fit religious homage. What with the standing, kneeling, and sitting of the worshippers, the wardens with their staves and the clerk in his box, the change by the priest, of dress from surplice to gown, and of place from the reading desk to the vestry, from the vestry to the altar, and thence to the pulpit, the whole scene has a theatrical air, and very little congeniality, till habit has reconciled it, with the feelings with which an humble christian goes to worship. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast of this parade with the simple service of the primitive believers.* Some of the ceremonies are fantastic beyond all but popish example. They do not appear in their most offensive shape in places where there prevails a taste for simplicity in divine service; but wherever there is an inclination to pomp, nothing can be more accommodating than the church; and a friend, who attended episcopal worship not long ago in Quebec, informs us, that so little in unison with protestant ideas was the show,—the bishop sitting in idle state under his canopy within the rails, and the singing men

* The manner of public worship as late as the end of the second century is described by Neal (vol. 2. p. 407.) on the authority of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, to have been this. First, the scriptures were read; after reading followed an exhortation to the practice and imitation of what was read; then all rose up and joined in prayer; after this they went to the sacrament, in the beginning whereof the president of the assembly poured out prayers and thanksgivings, *according to his ability*, and the people said *amen*; then followed the distribution of the elements, and a collection of alms.

in their copes chanting* the service from above, that but for the familiar English words, he might have doubted whether he were in the protestant cathedral of Canada, or in the neighbouring chapel of Notre Dame.† The feasts and fasts, in the observance of which, christians find so much satisfaction, were instituted to conciliate pagans, as a father of the fifth century quoted by Mr. Sparks, (p. 77.) ingenuously or inadvertently hints. "Our Lord God hath brought his dead (martyrs) into the room and place of your gods, whom he hath sent off, and given their honour to his martyrs. For instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus, are now celebrated the festivals of Peter and Paul, and Thomas, and Sergius, and other holy martyrs."

V. The episcopal service authorizes a rite not christian. We speak of the rite of confirmation, which has no decent show of scriptural evidence. Where the early preachers of our religion are said in the New Testament to have confirmed their converts, that confirmation in the faith, and that only, is spoken of, which is the effect of a better acquaintance with it, and of encouragements to hold fast the profession of it without wavering. Paul went with Silas "through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches," (Acts xv. 41.) in the same manner as with Barnabas he went "to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, *confirming the souls of the disciples, and* EXHORTING *them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*" (Acts xxiv. 21, 22.) Nor are the texts relating to *impo-*

* The homily on the time and place of prayer, expressly condemns chanting and playing upon the organ, as *sorely displeasing to God, and filthily defiling his holy house.* Book of Homilies, p. 294. Oxford edition, 8vo. 1816.

† In "Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy shaken," vol. 2. p.343,is preserved an account of the form of consecration of certain bishops in Dublin, by the archbishop of Armagh, primate of Ireland, in 1660,—a valuable document to shew what a magnificence the church affected, even at a time when it had not ceased to be hard pressed by the puritans. Among other remarkable things, these words are the conclusion of an anthem, composed for the occasion by the dean of St. Patrick's.

'Angels, look down, and joy to see
Like that above, a monarchy;
Angels, look down, and joy to see
Like that above, an hierarchy.'

Does not the following, from another source, look less like a directory of public worship, than like the orders to the scene-shifters and orchestra in the prompter's copy of a German play? "After the dismissal of the congregation, a few moments will be allowed for mental prayer, that God will pardon the imperfection of the prayers that have been offered, and dispose the hearts of his people to obey his will. The sexton will then throw open the doors, and the organ will commence soft and solemn music, rising with the swell, and ending with the full organ."

sition of hands any more to the purpose; for wherever this is spoken of in the New Testament as a religious ceremony, as Mr. Sparks with perfect accuracy remarks, "it always implies" as in Acts viii. 17. "a communication of extraordinary gifts," or, as in Acts vi. 6. "induction to some office." It were well if there were nothing worse to say of this rite than that it is unauthorized. But we fear that no good comes of the bishop's thanking God for having "regenerated his servants," i. e. in baptism, "by water and the Holy Ghost, and given unto them forgiveness of all their sins," and going on to "certify them by this sign," (i. e. by imposition of his hands,) of God's "favour and gracious goodness to them." In the view of this office, he who can bring to the altar rails the slender preparation of the creed, the Lord's prayer, &c. may go thence, if he believe his spiritual father, with the comforting assurance that his warfare is accomplished, that his iniquity is pardoned. It is a way to a quiet conscience too abrupt, we fear, not to be dangerous.—This is no trifling. The words of the office, if they mean any thing, mean what we have said. If not, they ought to be disused; for they are supposed to be significant, and so deceive.

VI. It involves false doctrine.

False we call it. Disputed it is, at all events; and therefore unfit to make a part of social worship; for this is a duty in which christians ought to be encouraged to unite, and it is no gracious thing to try one who comes to put himself on our christian hospitality, by a doctrinal shibboleth. We are not prepared to say, that a religious community are obliged, out of tenderness to others' views, to exclude from their devotions any thing which appears to them essential to acceptable worship; but we do say, that it is no matter of caprice, and that it is under a heavy responsibility that the decision, what is thus essential, must be made. The following are examples of false doctrine involved in the episcopal service.

1. The trinity.

This is supposed in different places. Particularly, the second petition in the litany is addressed to God the Son, the third to God the Holy Ghost, and the fourth to the "holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity," and great part of the same prayer or collection of prayers is offered to our Saviour.

2. The popish error of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacramental elements is certainly not discountenanced in the following passages of the order for the administration of the Lord's supper. "That we and all others who shall be partakers of this holy communion, may worthily receive the most precious body and blood of thy Son Jesus Christ."

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

3. That baptism is a saving ordinance.

"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate." "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit."*

4. That bishops are able to communicate the holy spirit, and confer the power of forgiving sins.

"When the prayer is done, the bishop, with the priests present, shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the order of priesthood, the receivers humbly kneeling, and the bishop saying, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; WHOSE SINS THOU DOST FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." Form and manner of ordering priests.†

These are samples of the service-book. We are accustomed to consider prayer as an awfully solemn thing. In this exercise, if at any time, we assuredly think that we ought to say what we mean. With a man, who, holding unitarian opinions, can use the litany as a prayer, or who, believing that no human power is competent to forgive sins, can ordain or be or-

* Dr. Wyatt calls the baptismal font *the laver of regeneration*, p. 37. In the church catechism, the child is taught to define the "inward and spiritual grace" in baptism, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." In the twenty-seventh article baptism is declared to be "not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of *regeneration or new birth*, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, are visibly signed and sealed." Nothing seemed wanting to carry episcopal pretensions the length of caricature, till Mr. Dodwell, as quoted by Doddridge, Lect. vol. ii. p. 373, started the idea, that "there goes along with the administration of baptism, if the person administering it be duly ordained, a certain immortalizing spirit, whereas persons dying unbaptized are not immortal;" that is to say in plainer English, episcopal ordination communicates the power of conferring immortality!

† We cannot enlarge on the idea that all this false doctrine is protected in the strong fortress of the prayer-book, but will rest it on the authority of Dr. Wyatt. "Forms serve as an unchanging standard of faith, always instructing the people, and acting as a barrier against the innovation of new doctrines." p. 31.

dained in the form we have extracted—we know not how to sympathize. We enter not at all into his views. We hope they are as just as they appear to us extraordinary.

VII. The book of common prayer contains improprieties of language.

We admitted that it is an advantage of preconceived prayers over extemporaneous, that care may be taken to exclude unsuitable expressions. In many instances in the episcopal service-book, this single advantage is waived. As it would be giving ourselves needless trouble to make out a list of such when it is done to our hand, we will give a specimen extracted from the fourteenth edition of the Protestant Dissenter's catechism.*

"*Uncouth and obsolete words and phrases.* '*Prevent* us in all our doings.—Let thy mercy *lighten* upon us.—Ordered by thy *governance*.—Thine *honourable* and *true* Son.—That we be *fulfilled* with thy grace.—Those things which we ask *faithfully*.—May do such things as be *rightful*.—For the *more* confirmation of the faith.—Through our sins and wickedness we be *sore let* and hindered.—Thy late *plague* of immoderate rain.—The spirit of *ghostly* strength.—Great *marvels*.—*Deadly* sins, &c.'

"Many also occur in the version of the *Psalms* read in the church, which is done from the *vulgate Latin*, (besides several gross mistranslations;) *e. g.* 'Tush.—Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.—Thou art my *worship*.—He is an *wholesome* defence.—Blessed are the *folk*.—The time thou hast *plagued* us.—O thou *most highest*.—With trumpets and *shawms*.—We have wished you *good luck*.—How sweet are thy words unto my *throat*.—I will bless her *victuals*, &c. &c.'

"*Redundancies.* 'Acknowledge and confess.—Not dissemble nor *cloak* them.—Pardoneth and absolveth.—Vanquish and overcome.—Worthily deserved.—Graciously hear us O Christ, graciously hear us O Lord Christ. (*See the end of the Litany.*) We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.' *Communion Service.*

"*Want of Connection;* particularly between the *Address* and the *Petition*—'Give peace in our time, O Lord, *because* there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.—O God who art the author of *peace* and lover of *concord*, in knowledge of whom, &c. defend us thy humble servants, &c.—Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest *great marvels*, send down

* The extract which follows of course refers to the English copy of the prayer-book. In the American some few of the faulty expressions quoted are corrected; the rest stand.

upon our Bishops and Curates, the healthful spirit of thy *grace!*' In this last instance the connexion unhappily suggests, what the compilers cannot be thought to have intended, viz. that it is a marvellous thing for Curates, and even Bishops, to have grace.

"*Absurd or unintelligible.* 'By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, &c. Good Lord deliver us.—Hast given us grace in the power of the divine majesty to worship the unity.—Those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not ask, vouchsafe to give us.—Thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father, Amen.'—In one of the prayers in the communion service, God is styled *Holy Father*.—But the rubric orders that on *Trinity-Sunday* this title shall be omitted; as if God was not *Holy Father* that day as much as any other.

"From this specimen of faults in the established Liturgy, it appears, that churchmen have not quite so much cause to boast of its perfection, and its superiority to extemporary prayers, even in point of *expression*, as might be imagined. And it should be considered, that in the latter case, improprieties, when observed, may be avoided: but in the former, the faults are established as well as the forms, and must be adhered to, even by those who perceive them."*

* There is so much good sense in the preface to the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the public worship of God*, that in conclusion of our remarks under this head we will venture to transcribe some paragraphs of it.

"In the beginning of the blessed reformation, our wise and pious ancestors took care to set forth an order for redress of many things, which they then, by the word, discovered to be vain, erroneous, superstitious, and idolatrous, in the public worship of God. This occasioned many godly and learned men to rejoice much in the book of *Common-Prayer*, at that time set forth; because the mass, and the rest of the *Latin* service, being removed, the public worship was celebrated in our own tongue: many of the common people also received benefit by hearing the scriptures read in their own language, which formerly were unto them as a book that is sealed.

"Howbeit, long and sad experience hath made it manifest, that the liturgy used in the church of England, 'notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers of it, hath proved an offence, not only to many of the godly at home, but also to the reformed churches abroad. For not to speak of urging the reading of all the prayers, which very greatly increased the burden of it; the many unprofitable and burdensome ceremonies contained in it, have occasioned much mischief, as well by disquieting the consciences of many godly ministers and people, who could not yield unto them, as by depriving them of the ordinances of God, which they might not enjoy without conforming or subscribing to those ceremonies. Sundry good christians have been, by means thereof, kept from the Lord's table, and divers able and faithful ministers, debarred from the exercise of

From a remark with which Mr. Sparks begins his third letter, we are led to suppose that he thinks better of the world than it deserves.

their ministry, (to the endangering of many thousand souls, in a time of much scarcity of faithful pastors) and spoiled of their livelihood, to the undoing of them and their families. Prelates and their faction have laboured to raise the estimation of it to such an height, as if there were no other worship, or way of worship of God amongst us, but only the service-book; to the great hindrance of the preaching of the word, and, (in some places, especially of late) to the justling of it out, as unnecessary; or (at best) as far inferior to the reading of *common-prayer*, which was made no better than an idol by many ignorant and superstitious people, who, pleasing themselves in their presence at that service, and their lip-labour in bearing a part in it, have thereby hardened themselves in their ignorance and carelessness of saving knowledge and true piety.

"In the mean time, papists boasted, that the book was a compliance with them in a great part of their service;* and so were not a little confirmed in their superstition and idolatry, expecting rather our return to them, than endeavouring the reformation of themselves: in which expectation they were of late very much encouraged, when, upon the pretended warrantableness of imposing the former ceremonies, new ones were daily obtruded upon the church.

"Add hereunto, (which was not foreseen, but since hath come to pass) that the liturgy hath been a great means, as on the one hand to make and increase an idle and unedifying ministry, which contented itself with set forms made to their hands by others, without putting forth themselves to exercise the gift of prayer, with which our Lord Jesus Christ pleaseth to furnish all his servants, whom he calls to that office: So on the other side it hath been (and ever would be, if continued a matter of endless strife and contention in the church, and a snare both to many godly and faithful ministers, who have been persecuted and silenced upon that occasion, and to others of hopeful parts, many of which have been, and more still would be diverted from all thoughts of the ministry to other studies; especially in these latter times, wherein God vouchsafeth to his people more and better means for the discovery of error and superstition and for attaining of knowledge in the mysteries of godliness, and gifts in preaching and prayer.

"Upon these, and many the like weighty considerations, in reference to the whole book in general, and because of divers particulars contained in it; not from any love to novelty, or intention to disparage our first reformers, (of whom we are persuaded, that, were they now alive, they would join with us in this work, and whom we acknowledge as excellent instruments, raised by God, to begin the purging and building of his house, and desire they may be had of us and posterity in everlasting remembrance, with thankfulness and honor) but that we may, in some measure, answer the gracious providence of God, which at this time calleth upon us for further reformation, and may satisfy our own consciences, and answer the expectation of other reformed churches, and the desires of many of the godly among ourselves," &c.

* King Edward, to satisfy the Devonshire rebels, wrote to them, "As for the service in the English tongue, it perchance seems to you a new service, but yet indeed it is no other but the old; the self-same words in English." Dissenter's Catechism, p. 48.

"I propose next to consider that part of the twentieth article, which asserts, that 'the church hath authority in controversies of faith.' This you pass over entirely; yet, if I am not mistaken, there is no one thing in which the episcopal church differs more essentially from Protestant churches in general. Few churches, I believe, assume, as a fundamental doctrine, the right and authority of deciding in matters of faith." p. 79.

We are afraid that the church is less distinguished than dishonoured by this claim; that it is a claim in which it mutually countenances, and is countenanced by, most of the sects in Christendom. Among dissenters the principle of toleration is indeed in better esteem, than when the presbyterian ministers and elders of London, convened* in provincial assembly in 1649, declared it to be "contrary to godliness, opening a door to libertinism and profaneness, and a tenet to be rejected as soul poison;" or than when a president of Harvard college† told our civil fathers, that "if ever toleration got footing among them, they might call its name Gad, for behold a troop cometh, a troop of all abominations." It has made some progress since those times, but it has yet great part of its destined triumph to atchieve. Mr. Sparks exposes in this letter with great force the arrogance and futility of the attempt to establish, by the imposition of tests, a human authority over men's consciences, and the evil consequences which follow thence both to clergy and people; and concludes in the following strain of good sense and eloquence.

"With equal propriety might the bounds of philosophical, physical, and political science have been fixed in the time of king Edward, as a standard of religious knowledge. The king and parliament assembled had the same authority to establish certain sciences, and to decree, that no innovations or improvements should be made, as they had to settle the rules of faith in religion. They might have decreed, that the earth was immoveable, and the sun, moon, and all the stars were whirled around it once in twenty-four hours, that the new system of Copernicus was a dangerous heresy, which all the king's well meaning subjects should carefully avoid. They might have enjoined it as a part of the philosophy of the realm, that alchymy and astrology were founded on the true principles of nature, as might be proved 'by most certain warrants' of physical phenomena; and we should now be edified with treatises on the philosopher's

* Toulmin's History of Dissenters, p. 269.

† Oakes, in his Election sermon. "To authorize an untruth" says the simple cobbler of Agawam (Ward of Ipswich in 1646-7) "To authorize an untruth by a toleration of state, is to build a sconce against the walls of Heaven, to batter God out of his chair."

stone, transmutations, and a universal medicine. We should have books to tell us what planets ruled at our birth, interspersed with appropriate figures of horoscopes, schemes of nativity, and positions of the stars. They might have decreed, that the schoolmen were the only rational metaphysicians, and that every college in the kingdom should make the categories, analytics, topics, and sophistics of Aristotle an essential branch of education.

"There would have been just as much propriety in fixing rules of belief on these subjects, as there was in drawing up the thirty-nine articles, and the formularies of the church, and setting them forth as a standard of religious faith. Newton, and Bacon, and Locke, would have been considered meddling dissenters from the established philosophy; but still, the force of truth would have been resistless, and would finally have prevailed. So it must be in religion. Error may be concealed and protected for a long time under the guise of forms, and in the mists of ignorance; but the light of truth will at length penetrate so flimsy a covering, and dissolve the cloud.

"It is said, that creeds have a tendency to keep schism out of the church, by causing all its members to think alike. This would be good reasoning, if the church were infallible; but on no other supposition. Unless it were infallible, there could be no certainty of its having the only true faith; and no church should claim authority to keep its members in ignorance and error to prevent schism. Milton, speaking on this subject with particular reference to the doctrines of the church, and the scheme of prelacy, observes, 'If to bring a numb and chill stupidity of soul, an unactive blindness of mind upon the people, by their leaden doctrine, or no doctrine at all; if to persecute all knowing and zealous christians by the violence of their courts, be to keep away schism, they keep schism away indeed; and by this kind of discipline, all Italy and Spain is as purely and politically kept from schism, as England hath been by them. With as good plea might the dead palsy boast to a man, 'it is I that free you from stitches and pains, and the troublesome feeling of cold and heat, of wounds and strokes; if I were gone, all these would molest you.' The winter might as well vaunt itself against the spring, 'I destroy all noisome and rank weeds, I keep down all pestilent vapours;' yes, and all wholesome herbs, and all fresh dews, by your violent and hidebound frost; but when the gentle west winds shall open the fruitful bosom of the earth, thus overgirded by your imprisonment, then the flowers put forth and spring, and then the sun shall scatter the mists, and the manuring hand of the tiller shall root up all that burdens the soil, without thanks to your bondage.'*

"These remarks are but too applicable to fixed formularies of faith of every description. They are made and imposed without

* The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty; Prose Works, vol. i. p. 63.

authority ; and any attempt to force them on the minds of men is an encroachment on the liberty, and an insult to the understanding of christians. The apostles took upon them no such power. St. Paul enjoins the Galatians to 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' And to the Corinthians he writes, 'We have not dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy ; for by faith ye stand.' 2 Cor. i. 24.—Not by faith in creeds, for this would be giving up our liberty, taking upon us a yoke of bondage, and submitting to the dominion of others ; but by faith in the word of God, which all persons are free to consult,—and this freedom all must be allowed to enjoy, before they can be required to believe or obey."* pp. 105—108.

The article on a part of which Mr. Sparks is here remarking, runs thus ;

"The church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and *authority in controversies of faith ;* and yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of scripture that it be repugnant to another ; wherefore although the church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation."

It did not fall in the way of Mr. Sparks to state a fact which however is not unimportant. It is, that for the egregious folly, as it may seem, of this article, the earliest churchmen are probably not responsible. There is good reason to think that the first clause was not inserted till a subsequent age. It is not found in the forty-two articles of king Edward, nor in the original copy of the thirty-nine, subscribed by both houses of convocation, and now preserved in a public library at Cambridge. There is reason to think that it was not even in the copy authorized by parliament in 1571, but was afterwards surreptitiously inserted. An account of the affair may be found in Neal's history, vol. i. p. 207, or in

* The following remark of Watson seems to us to contain the whole doctrine of creeds as a reasonable man can receive it. "I certainly dislike the imposition of all creeds formed by human authority; though I do not dislike them as useful summaries of what *their compilers believe to be true*, either in natural or revealed religion." Life, p. 203.

To the same effect Dr. Ware ; "As to the propriety of having a creed, no doubt, I believe, has ever been entertained. Unitarians have always claimed the right of every individual to have his own particular creed. What they have sometimes had occasion to object to, is, not that each of the several sects and denominations of christians should have its own creed, nor that any individual should have one, but that any, whether an individual or a body of christians, should insist upon their creed being the creed of others." Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists, p. 9.

a note to p. 306, vol. ii. of the bishop of Lincoln's Elements of Theology. However the truth may be, it is no longer of consequence except as affecting the wisdom of the early reformers, as the clause in question undoubtedly made part of the articles confirmed by act of parliament on the restoration.

We know not an example of more unanswerable reasoning, than that contained in Mr. Sparks's fourth letter *on the Calvinistic character* of the formularies of the English church. He begins with the statement, that of the *five points*, as they are called, of Calvin, namely, total depravity, special election, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the final perseverance of the saints;

"The two first only are fundamental doctrines, of which the three last are necessary consequences. If all men have originally a corrupt nature, which renders them worthy of divine wrath and condemnation, and if God in his mercy have decreed, according to 'his everlasting purpose,' that a certain number of his creatures shall be rescued from this deplorable condition and finally be saved; it is a natural and necessary consequence, that all such persons are redeemed by a particular redemption, are effectually called, and will persevere to the end. The decree of election extends only to particular persons, and therefore the redemption it procures is a particular redemption; it is an absolute decree, and therefore all whom it calls, are effectually called; it is an immutable decree, and therefore all whom it restores to the condition of saints, must retain this condition.

"The fundamental doctrines of Calvinism, then, are total depravity, and election; and if these are found to be contained in the articles and homilies, I suppose it may be rightly inferred, that such are the doctrines of the church." pp. 110—111.

The first of these doctrines he finds in the following passages of the articles:

"'Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is *the fault and corruption of the nature of every man*, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, *whereby man is very far* (quam longissime) *gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit;* and therefore in every person born into this world it *deserveth God's wrath and damnation.* And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated.' "—Art. 9th.

"'The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, *that he cannot turn and prepare himself*, by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God." Art. x. "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his spirit, *are not pleasant to God*, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ,

neither do they make men meet to receive grace;—yea; rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, *we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.* Art. xiii.' "

And in the following of the homilies, which, by a vote of the convention in 1814, are required to be studied by all candidates for the ministry:

" 'When our great grandfather Adam had broken God's commandment, in eating the apple forbidden him in Paradise, at the motion and suggestion of his wife, *he purchased thereby not only to himself, but also to his posterity forever*, the just wrath and indignation of God, who, according to his former sentence pronounced at the giving of the commandment, condemned both him and all his to everlasting death, both of body and soul;—he was cast out of Paradise, he was no longer a citizen of heaven, but a firebrand of hell, and a bond slave of the devil.'—*2d Homily concerning the death and passion of our Saviour.*

" 'Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, *without any spark of goodness in him*, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds.'—*Homily for Whitsunday, part 1st.*

" 'Of ourselves we be crab trees, that can bring forth no apples. We be of ourselves of such earth as can bring forth but weeds, nettles, briars, cockle, and darnel.—Hitherto have we heard what we are of ourselves; very sinful, wretched, and damnable; *we are not able to think a good thought or work a good deed*, so that we can find in ourselves no hope of salvation, but rather whatsoever maketh unto our destruction.'—*Homily of the misery of man.*

" 'This so great and miserable a plague, if it had only rested on Adam, who first offended, it had been so much the easier, and might the better have been borne. But it fell not only on him, *but also on his posterity and children for ever*, so that the whole brood of Adam's flesh should sustain the self same fall and punishment, which their forefather by his offence most justly had deserved.—As in Adam all men universally sinned, so in Adam all men universally received the reward of sin; that is to say, became mortal, and subject unto death, having in themselves nothing but everlasting damnation both of body and soul;— they were nothing else but children of perdition, partakers of hell fire.' "—*Homily of the nativity.*

For proof that the second fundamental doctrine of Calvin, that of special election, is avowed by the church, he refers to its seventeenth article:

" 'Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed. by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to

honour. Wherefore they, which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.

" 'As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well, because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

" ' Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth in holy scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.' "

And to such expressions as these in the book of homilies; " whom God hath *appointed to everlasting salvation;*" " the undoubted children of God, appointed to everlasting life;" " sons of God, and elect of him unto salvation." *Homily on Almsdeeds.*

In conclusion of this argument, Mr. Sparks has collected an overwhelming mass of evidence to prove, that " the tenets of the reformers, who framed and adopted the articles of the church," accorded with those of Calvin. The inference is direct, that had they studied precision of language far less than they have done, it would be certain what was intended to be conveyed by the words in which their sentiments were formally embodied. " If the tenets of the reformers were not Calvinistic, it will be difficult to prove any thing by written testimony; and it is not manifesting much respect for their memory, to charge them with writing articles, and teaching doctrines, which did not accord with their sentiments."

A great majority of the clergy of the English church, both in Europe and America, is understood to entertain sentiments the opposite of those of Calvin. Yet to these Calvinistic articles, in entering on their office, they give, in the most solemn manner, their assent. " Can these things be, without our special won-

der?" The Englishman is the more leniently dealt with. He is required only to engage for the present, and "acknowledge all and every the articles, *to be agreeable to the word of God.*" The American must take on him obligations for the future; "I do solemnly engage *to conform to the doctrines* and worship of the Protestant Episcopal church in these United States." He formally renounces for himself the advantage of future inquiry, for any other object than to confirm his settled views; and engages forever to adhere to such sentiments, as the studies that have fitted him for deacon's orders have led him to adopt. Whatever learning and piety may do to illustrate certain obscurities in the religious system, he gives a pledge, that, as far as depends on him, such as the current belief is at present, such it shall ever be; and from the light that is kindling in a glorious blaze all about him, should a random ray fall on his averted eyes, he promises to shut them,—and *conform.*

It is a sad blot on the memory of one of the wisest men, that he gave all the weight of his great authority to the idea, that the articles of the church, are articles not of faith, but of peace, and that the precise solemn declaration, "I acknowledge all and every the articles to be agreeable to the word of God," meant only, I promise never to impugn them. He saw, (as a man of his penetration and philosophical freedom from bias, could scarcely fail to do,) that doctrines, which had had their day, were most expressly and unequivocally avowed in these articles; and, granting that no undetected selfish feeling swayed him, he was willing to do something to save the church from being deprived, in her time of need, of the services of men able and virtuous as he was. To this end he resorted to a piece of casuistry utterly unworthy of his name, and it is not the least of the charges that this rule of exclusion must answer to, that it was able for once to pervert such a mind as Paley's. His reasoning (that it should ever be said of him!) is as weak as his doctrine is depraving. His preliminary remark is indefensible. It is not true that, by requiring subscription to articles containing statements of doctrine, the legislature of the 13th Eliz. intended to exclude puritans from offices in the church. On the contrary, it was, long after, a favourite complaint of churchmen against that sect, that their dissent was owing to an unreasonable pertinacity, a narrow spirit of opposition about things of minor moment, unjustifiable when in the main points of doctrine all were agreed. This was the ground taken by churchmen. Whether solid or not is of no moment. It shows that they did not pretend by doctrinal tests to shut puritans out of the fold. But passing this, there is another incurable flaw in the argument. We admit the principle of this writer, that the

animus imponentis ought to govern the conscience of him who assumes the engagement. But we reject his answer to the question *quis imposuit*, as well as to that *quo animo*. Who imposes the test? *Not* the legislature of the 13th Elizabeth. The legislature of the 13th Eliz. is a nonentity. It is no more a party to the contract of subscription, than the first senate of Rome. The parties are, the candidate for ordination who subscribes or engages, and the existing episcopal church, which, as a condition of his assuming an office in it, requires his subscription or engagement. It is the existing church, whose security is concerned, and which thinks to promote its security by exacting such engagements. If it did not think them useful, it has the power to dispense with them.

The meaning of the existing establishment, then, is the *animus imponentis*. And what does it mean? If, as the words explicitly signify, to require of the candidate a bona fide assurance of belief, and promise of conformity, then he who enters into the required engagement without entertaining the belief so exactly described, or persisting in the conformity so positively contracted for, commits a fraudulent act. If on the other hand, the church means something different from what it seems to mean, what is to be said of a community which trifles with such measured words,—which unnecessarily afflicts tender consciences with a form of language which it *means to be unmeaning;* which holds out to the world the idea, that it is imposing a test of faith, when it is only enjoining a rule of forbearance,* and tempts its members to wonder at their guides, who give so unheard of a significance to language?

* As long as these are entitled not articles for trying the wits of clerks, and confounding those of laymen, but "for the avoiding of the *diversities of opinions*, and for the stablishing of consent touching true religion," that is, by excluding dissentients from the pale, the remark of Burnet will stand good, that "they who subscribed, did either believe, or grossly prevaricate." The following are the concluding remarks of the Bishop of Lincoln's Elements of Theology.

"I have thus endeavoured to explain the meaning of 'the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,' and to prove that they are founded in Scripture, and conformable to the opinions of the early Christians. All persons, when they enter into holy orders, or are admitted to any ecclesiastical cure or benefice, are required by law to subscribe these articles, with a design that those who are employed in the ministry of our established church, whether as curates or incumbents, should unfeignedly believe the truth of the doctrines which they contain. 'The avoiding of diversities of opinion, and the establishing of consent touching true religion,' was the professed object of these articles; and consequently they lose their effect, if they do not produce a general agreement among such as subscribe them. 'I do willingly and ex animo subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England,' is the indispensable form of subscription; and therefore it behoves every one, before he offers himself a candidate for holy orders, to peruse carefully the articles of our church, and to compare them with the

But we do not suppose that this profligate evasion of a most solemn engagement has credit enough to be practised. They who, rejecting the doctrinal views of Calvin, profess assent or promise conformity to these articles, have persuaded themselves, we doubt not, that they admit an anti-Calvinistic interpretation; *admit*, we say, for nobody claims any thing more. But this gives us occasion to remark, how mischievous and futile a thing at once is this imposition of doctrinal tests. When the framers of the articles had gone through their work, they thought that they had built a fabric in which the blind doctrine of destiny might dwell securely and forever. But another generation found out that Calvinism was a mistake, and then the question came up, how heterodoxy and conformity should be reconciled. Silence was the first natural resort. They would say nothing of their heresy to others, and acknowledge it as faintly as possible to themselves. But out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak at length. And the deviation from the supposed church doctrine being notorious, yet the church standing too pleasant a thing to be needlessly relinquished, the experiment was thought worth trying, whether there could not be brought about a persuasion, that the established credenda were less strict than they had seemed to be; and forthwith the best selected words were found to be equivocal, and the best certified history brought into doubt. By and by came a sagacious man, who saw that the knot was too cunningly contrived to be thus untied, and that they who were working so intently at it, were but entangling themselves with its threads;

written Word of God. If, upon mature examination, he believes them to be authorized by Scripture, he may conscientiously subscribe them; but if, on the contrary, he thinks that he sees reason to dissent from any of the doctrines asserted in them, no hope of emolument or honour, no dread of inconvenience or disappointment, should induce him to express his solemn assent to propositions, which in fact he does not believe. It is not indeed necessary that he should approve every word or expression, but he ought to believe all the fundamental doctrines, of the articles; all those tenets in which our church differs from other churches, or from other sects of Christians. He ought to feel that he can from his own conviction maintain the purity of our established religion, and sincerely and zealously enforce those points of faith and practice, which our church declares to be the revealed will of God. This appears to me the only just ground of conscientious subscription to the articles; and let it be ever remembered, that in a business of this serious and important nature, no species whatever of evasion, subterfuge, or reserve, is to be allowed, or can be practised, without imminent danger of incurring the wrath of God. The articles are to be subscribed in their plain and obvious sense, and assent is to be given to them simply and unequivocally. Thus only can a person offer himself at the table of the Lord as his minister with safety; thus only can he expect to receive the divine blessing upon that course of life to which he then solemnly devotes himself."

and as he would not suffer it to bind him, he took a shorter way and cut it. Thus right views on one subject have gained a footing in the church, and with such fair shew of being guests regularly introduced, that conscientious men within the church make no scruple to do them reverence; and thus, after much delay, and by much management, and at great cost of plain dealing, and great distress to good men, the same object is at length effected, which, but for these nuisances of creeds, might have been accomplished in a fair open manner long ago. Truth will not be defeated by such feeble obstacles. If shut out from the broad, direct road where it would rather travel in daylight, it will force a path through briars and morasses, or dig a subterranean passage. It has an unconquerable instinct of activity, and onward it will urge a direct, or a winding way. Creeds are leaden shackles,—heavy, but flexible. As soon as they begin to gall, the sufferer finds means to stretch them, and they keep on to widen, till at last they fall off. They are nets, however industriously spun, of spider's web;—of power to confine the puny insect to be tortured, but the stronger prisoner breaks them through. They are mischievous, because they delay the progress of truth, and force it into a circuitous path which it would gladly avoid. And they are futile, because it will find a way, to whatever inconvenience it may put its followers. It were as promising an attempt to dam the ocean, or hold a comet with a kite-string, as to confine truth with such shreds as these. Such as has been their uniform effect, such, so long as they remain blended with human error, will it always be; one generation will believe, another will qualify and explain, and a third renounce them; and we would venture to predict on the general ground, even though we were far less authorized by recent appearances, that they who live some hundred years hence may read two volumes of elements, written in the sacred theology chair of the Andover institution, to show that the creed of that seminary frowns on the Assembly's Catechism, and that Bartlett and Spring were excellent Arminians.

The last two letters of Mr. Sparks are on *the doctrine of the trinity*. They contain an able statement of the argument, and happy illustrations of some difficult texts; and are particularly full on the subject of the two natures united in our Saviour. They are in effect a separate work on the subject, and as such we shall be happy at some future time to find an opportunity to recur to them.

From the glance we have given at its history, we may remark how unreasonable is the attempt made to excite a feeling of ve-

neration for the English church, as the representative of Protestantism. We have more than once heard it called "the oldest daughter of the protestant reformation." It was no child of the reformation; but the birth of an unblessed union between decrepid superstition and immature reason. Or if a daughter, it was like the thankless daughters of Lear. It had the spirit of a parricide. It drove the reformation out from its shelter to abide the "pelting of the pitiless storm," and we may thank a younger branch of the family, that it did not perish there.—The English church delayed the progress of the reformation. The mind rose, when the light of a better day shone upon it, but one step from its deathlike posture. Prelacy watched it, and weighed it down with a load of fetters, which to this day its convulsive struggles have not wholly shaken off.—It broke the spirit of the reformation. It was as noble, pure, self-devoting a spirit as ever religion kindled. But prelacy brought store of mitres, and corrupted it.—It oppressed the friends of the reformation. The best scholars, preachers, and men in the nation, deprived of their cures, forbidden to say a word for the great cause of protestantism, to which they had devoted their lives and were ready to resign them, shut up in English prisons, exiled to a precarious toleration on the continent, or living in contented destitution of almost all things in America, are vouchers of the dear filial love, which the church of England bore the reformation.

We say this not invidiously, (God forbid we should wish to wound,) but to meet an unmeaning appeal often made. Let the episcopal church in America make its election. If it considers itself a distinct body from that in England, let it answer to no charges except what affect itself; but then let it take such rank as its own deserts may warrant, and not claim a stock of merit bequeathed to it by English worthies. If on the other hand, it will stay itself on the reputation of the English establishment, let it be bold and consistent, and assume that reputation in a mass. This it may find perhaps to be rather a burden, than a prop. The history of that establishment is, to too great an extent to be subject of boasting, a history of selfishness, chicanery, and violence. From the time when Henry VIII. from a bad lust of power, organized a religious authority dependent on the royal will, or from a meaner passion threw off subjection to the papal see, till the passing of the needlessly cruel act of uniformity, under Charles II.—the infamous law which deprived protestant England in one day, of the services of two thousand men, the best boast of the protestant name, and with a more wanton severity exiled them beyond the reach of those, who would have stood between them and

starvation,*—it is a history of unrelenting strictness when in power, and of abject artifice and false professions in disgrace. Since then, through some changes of fortune, and with the loss of the power of persecuting, wrested from it by the growth of better principles in politics, it has continued,—doubtless with the exceptions which excellent individuals make in every such community,—to breathe the haughty, obstinate, exclusive and

* "Have you never read, what desolations *Laud* brought upon *our fathers*, whilst yet in your Church? How *many hundreds* of them were sequestered, driven from their livings, excommunicated, persecuted in the high-commission court, and forced to leave the kingdom for not *punctually conforming* to all the ceremonies and rites; and not daring to tell their people, that they might *lawfully* profane *the sabbath* by gambols and sports; and to publish from their pulpits the *permission* of the *King* to *break the command of* God—And yet you ask—'*Were your fathers ever persecuted while they continued in the Church?*'

"Pray! what was it peopled the savage deserts of *North America?* Was it not the *thousands* of persecuted and oppressed families, who fled from *tyrannising* Bishops? Who not being suffered to worship quietly in their *native* country, as their consciences directed, sought a peaceful retreat from the rage of their *Fellow-Christians*, amongst more *hospitable Indians*.—To omit a thousand acts of cruelty, which through several successive reigns, *our fathers* suffered not only *from*, but when actually *in*, *the Church*,—Did she not at last, in a most arbitrary and unrighteous manner *cast out* at once above *two thousand* of them, excellent and pious Ministers, and abandon them, and their starving families, to great poverty and distress? To *heighten* that distress, did not your Church, ——— ——— *banish them five miles from any city, borough, or church in which they had before served: and thereby put them at a proper distance from their acquaintance and friends, who might minister to their relief?* Did she not by *another* Act forbid their meeting to *worship* God, any where but in your *own churches*, under the penalties of heavy fines, imprisonments, and banishment to foreign lands?

"In consequence of these *cruel* Acts, were not vast numbers of *pious clergymen*, our forefathers, (once the *glory* of your Church) with multitudes of their people, laid in prisons amongst thieves and common malefactors, where they suffered the greatest hardships, indignities, oppressions; their houses were rudely rifled, their goods made a prey to hungry informers, and their families given up to beggary and want. 'An estimate was published of near *eight thousand* Protestant *Dissenters*, who had perished in prison in the reign only of *Charles* II. By severe penalties inflicted on them, for assembling to worship God, they suffered in their trade and estates in the compass of a few years, at least two millions; and a list of *sixty thousand* persons was taken, who had suffered on a religious account, betwixt the *Restoration* and the *Revolution*.'†—Behold, the groans and the blood of myriads of oppressed *Puritans*, which cry beneath the altar. *How long*, O Lord! But you are *deaf* to all their groans—And with insensibility enough ask—*Were your fathers ever persecuted?*—

"'But the Presbyterian and Independent Churches have each in their day of power, discovered as much, and indeed *more* of that Spirit.' Too

† Vid. Neal's Hist. Purit. vol. iv. p. 554.

indolent spirit of an establishment; and the last act of public importance, by which it is known, was the refusing to the worthiest members of its communion release from a useless obligation, which it went against their consciences to take.

In this country, a country reserved as it seems by providence, for the last experiment whether man can bear and consent to be free, good, intelligent, and happy, whether those principles may yet prevail which have hitherto been kept down by his ignorance, his vices and his pride, it is not perhaps much to be feared, that institutions, the poor relic of a catholic and feudal age, the naked marrowless skeleton of the gaudy thing they were, should ever gain a permanent establishment. They seem to have no congeniality with the spirit of the times. They grow in an unpropitious soil, and when the sun is up, they will be scorched, and because they have no root will wither away. But if we should prove to be deceived in this,—if here too the best hopes of philanthropy were doomed to be again struck down, if hither too, religion, pure and undefiled, should be pursued,—pursued to her last retreat, where, for the sake of rendering a spontaneous obedience, and breathing an unfettered prayer, she was willing to sit at her board with famine, and lay herself to rest on rocks, we trust that the spirit will not be dead which spoke in the words of one of our own divines,—"if the land will not help the woman, let her go into another wilderness."

much of that *bad Spirit*, it is acknowledged, they have *each* shewn. But surely there is *no comparison* betwixt the cruelties and oppressions of your Church, and of their's. Your *little finger has been thicker than their loins* "*—Dissenting Gentleman's Letters, p. 32—34.

Acts of Parliament were the artillery of the establishment. Its small-arms discharged such missiles as these, in a tract ascribed to archbishop Parker, and quoted by Neal, i. 572. He calls the non-conformists "schismatics, bellie-gods, deceivers, flatterers, fools, such as have been unlearnedlie brought up in profan occupations; puffed up in arrogancie of themselves, chargeable to vanities of assertions: of whom it is feared that they make posthast to be anabaptists and libertines, gone out from us, but belike never of us; differing not much from donatists, shrinking and refusing ministers of *London;* disturbers, factious, willful entanglers, and encumberers of the consciences of their herers, girders, nippers, scoffers, biters, snappers at superiors, having the spirit of irony, like to audiani, smelling of donatistrie, or of papistrie, rogatianes, circumcellians, and pelagians."

* The English presbyterians and independents are not to be acquitted of a persecuting spirit, but their acts of oppression were of a much milder character. Cromwell's ordinance for ejecting *scandalous, ignorant and insufficient ministers and schoolmasters* (passed in 1654) allowed to the party ejected a convenient time for his removal, and reserved *three fifths* for the support of his family. There is no religious tyranny of his on record like that of the Act of Uniformity The spirit of religious establishments is uniformly the same. The expressions of bishop Magee with regard to Unitarians do not yield in indecency to those of archbishop Parker respecting the dissenters of his day.

INTELLIGENCE.

British and Foreign Bible Society.—The 16th anniversary of this magnificent institution was held May 3d. The Report of the Committee commenced with the foreign relations of the society. In France their exertions had answered their most sanguine expectations. The duke d'Angoulême had expressed himself most friendly to the society and their objects, and the duke de Cazes had subscribed 1000 livres in support of their funds.—In the United States and their dependencies, Christians of every denomination, and even Jews, exhibit the most earnest desire to possess the Scriptures, and to support the societies by which they are distributed.—From Switzerland, Hanover, Saxony, Wirtemberg, Prussia, Denmark, Russia, Sweden, and Norway, the intelligence was of the most gratifying kind. Similar accounts had been received from the Ionian Islands, and from Athens, where Bible societies had been established.—The Eighth Report of the Calcutta Bible society, and that from Madras and its dependencies, furnished abundant proof of its advantages.—In China, though the jealous power of the government still operates to prevent the admission of the holy Scriptures; yet well founded hopes are entertained, that the exertions which are making will eventually succeed in diffusing the light of the Gospel over that vast empire. Under the direction of Dr. Morrison, the whole Bible has now been translated into the Chinese language, and the one thousand pounds voted by the Society for that object had been duly appropriated.—The New South Wales Bible Society had been zealously supported by all the civil, military, and ecclesiastical authorities in the colony, and its establishment promised the most beneficial results.—The reports which had been made from the South Sea Islands were most gratifying. The whole Gospel of St. Luke had been translated into the Otaheitan language, and three thousand copies had been printed and nearly distributed.—In Africa and America, the kingdom of Hayti, and the Western Archipelago, there was unquestionable evidence of the great and growing success of that holy cause in which the Society is engaged.

Dr. Adam Clarke introduced to the meeting two Ceylonese priests. These young men had been brought up in the temple of Vishnu from the time they were five years of age. About three years ago a translation of the Bible fell into their hands, and their faith in the worship of Vishnu was immediately shaken.

They happen to be of the class, or caste of fishermen in Ceylon, and were particularly struck with that part of the Scripture in which our Saviour tells the sons of Zebedee to follow him, and he would make them fishers of men. They became curious to see the people who had the means of sending throughout the world the glorious truths of the Gospel. They applied to the then governor, who was about to return to England, to be allowed a passage in the same vessel, but were refused. So great, however, was their desire to visit England, that they actually took a boat, followed the vessel to sea, and were taken on board whilst she was under way. The Governor having put their sincerity to sufficient proof, treated them with the utmost kindness; and on their arrival in England, Dr. Clarke took them into his house, gave them every instruction in his power, and eventually admitted them into the bosom of the church by Christian baptism; and he had now the pleasure of presenting them as the first-fruits of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the island of Ceylon.

American Bible Society.—There have been printed at the Depository of the American Bible Society, during the past year,

Bibles,	47,000
Testaments,	16,250
In the first three years,	
Bibles, 76,820	
Testaments, 24,000	
	100,820

One hundred and seventy-one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two Bibles and Testaments, or parts of the latter, have been printed from the stereotype plates of the American Bible Society, or on common type, or obtained for circulation since the commencement of its operations.

Several other editions of Bibles and Testaments have been put to press, among which is an edition of two thousand French Bibles, from the stereotype plates belonging to the Society.

There have been issued from the Depository, from the 30th April, 1819, to the same period in the present year,

Bibles,	26,800
Testaments,	14,393
Epistles of St. John, in Delaware,	259
Gospel of St. John, in Mohawk,	62
	41,514

In the three preceding years there were issued,

Bibles and Testaments, - - - 55,122

Epistles of St. John, in Delaware, - 467——55,589

Making a total of ninety-seven thousand one hundred and two Bibles and Testaments, and parts of the latter, issued from the Depository of the National Bible Society from its establishment.

Of the above Bibles, there were, German, 281—French, 227—Gælic, 71—Welsh, 1.

Of the above Testaments, 563 were Spanish. Of these, there were gratuitously sent to Valparaiso, 248—to New Orleans, 187—to Trinidad, 6—and to St. Croix, 50.

The remaining 72 copies have been sent to Societies, or disposed of to individuals.

Third Report of the Peace Society in London.—No new Tract has been added to its publications since last year. A new edition of Tract No. 3, consisting of 10,000 copies, one of No. 5, consisting of 5,000 copies, and 10,000 copies of the Second Report, have been printed since last year, making a grand total of 153,000 Tracts, Reports, &c. printed since the formation of the Society. The circulation of Tracts has been continued, and about 30,000 have been distributed and disposed of. An edition of 5000 copies of the Solemn Review has been printed at Pyrmont, in Germany; and these have been circulated through the hands of the booksellers in the principal towns in Germany and Switzerland, from the grand fair at Leipzig. Inquiries have been made for the other Tracts, but your Committee having taken some preliminary measures with a view to publishing in French and Dutch, have not yet thought it prudent to add to the number of Tracts in German.

The amount of Subscriptions and Donations ending June 14, 1819, is 494*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* making the total receipts of the society 1073*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* Between two and three hundred new Subscribers are reported since last year. Additional Auxiliary Societies have been established within the year at Worcester, Frome, and Dundee; and a Ladies' Association at Lymington, Hants. The progress of the Societies previously established, which have reported to your Committee, is encouraging; and some of them have been actively engaged in pursuing the objects of the Society. A Society in communication with your Committee has been established at Glasgow, from whose zealous and active co-operation your Committee anticipate the greatest assistance in this work. This Society has circulated some thousands of your publications, besides several editions of Tracts of their own

selection, and an excellent Address adapted for general circulation.

The accounts from America continue to give a favourable statement of the progress of Peace Societies, upwards of twenty being now formed on that continent. The Massachusetts Society in the year 1818 had distributed upwards of 8000 Tracts, and had received an accession of 246 new Members. The Society at New York had also circulated some thousands of Tracts, and is reported to be in a state of progressive increase. Besides these efforts, different individuals have exerted themselves with activity in the distribution of pamphlets. One individual, a mechanic in the State of New York, has published at his own expense 14,000 copies of the Friend of Peace, and 2,500 copies of the Solemn Review of the Custom of War.

New York Peace Society.—The operations of the Society during the past year, though not very extensive, have, your Committee believe, contributed in no small degree to the furtherance of their object. The exertions of the Committee have been chiefly occupied in the circulation of the best publications, tending to show that war is inconsistent with the Christian religion, and the real interests of mankind. Besides a large edition of the Report of last year, of "Tract No. III, The Question of War reviewed," a considerable number of the Tracts previously published by the Society, Letters to Governor Strong, and some minor publications, the Committee have distributed about 1500 of different numbers of "The Friend of Peace," and some hundreds of Tracts and Addresses, received from the London, Glasgow, and other Peace Societies. One hundred copies of the Report read at our last Anniversary, and one entire set and 25 copies of No. XIV. of the Friend of Peace, have been sent to the London Peace Society; 50 copies of the Report, and a few copies of the other publications, to the Glasgow Peace Society; 50 copies of the Report to the Massachusetts, and 50 to the Rhode Island, Peace Societies; 300 copies of the Report, 100 each of Nos. XIV, XV, and XVI, of the Friend of Peace, 6 Reports of the London Society, and 6 each of their Tracts I. to IV, and 24 Addresses of the Glasgow Society, were forwarded to Yale College, in New Haven, for distribution at the Commencement.

Rhode Island Peace Society.—There have been printed and purchased the past year, in behalf of the Society, 8736 Tracts, of which 8000 copies of the "Address of the Glasgow Peace Society" were attached to the Rhode Island Almanack. This mode of circulating information upon the subject of war we find

highly useful, and are happy to state that it meets the approbation of the friends of peace, both in Europe and America, who propose following the example. There have been distributed among the members of this Society 236 copies of the Friend of Peace, and 500 copies of the Second Annual Report. These Tracts have been favorably received, and several within our knowledge have been convinced by reading them, of the impropriety of shedding the blood of their fellow creatures, and have adopted different views upon the subject of war. There have been added to this Society the past year 20 members, which make our present number 114. Although our additions have not been great, yet we have reason to believe that the number of the friends of peace in this State is constantly augmenting.

A Marine Bible Society, has lately been established in Boston.

Methodist Episcopal Church.—The following is a table of the number of coloured and white communicants in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, in July, 1819.

	Whites.	Coloured.	Total.
Ohio Conference	28,361	713	29,134
Missouri	4,580	184	4,764
Tennessee	18,987	1,689	20,676
Mississippi	1,959	412	2,371
S. Carolina	21,059	11,586	32,646
Virginia	17,234	5,351	22,585
Baltimore	24,635	8,161	32,796
Philadelphia	24,635	8,161	32,796
New York	21,483	1,455	22,638
New England	15,149	163	15,312
Genesee	23,775	138	23,913
	201,750	38,073	246,924

Total in 1818, 229,627—Increase in 1819, 17,297.—There are 812 travelling, and more than 1000 local preachers in the eleven conferences.

Christianity in the South Seas.—The progress of the gospel in Otaheite and the neighbouring islands continues to be very encouraging. The missionaries give the following account of the publication and distribution of the scriptures.—"The impression of St. Luke's gospel, in the Taheitean language, is now completed, viz. 3000 copies; and although we demand, as formerly men-

tioned, a quantity of cocoa-nut oil, as the price of each copy, to help in defraying the expense of printing more, yet the people manifest the utmost eagerness to obtain them. It is matter of much concern to us, that great numbers must go without any for the present. Many of the inhabitants of the Palliser's and other islands, to the eastward of Otaheite, have also demolished their idols, and become professed worshippers of the true God; and 320 of them have lately come to these islands in order to obtain books.—Some elementary ones have been given to them, but it grieves us that we cannot let them have more."

"We wish to carry on the printing with spirit. An edition of 10,000 copies of Luke, as many of Matthew, and of the Acts (which are in a course of preparation, and will be ready by the time we obtain paper) will not be too many for the urgent calls of the natives."

The Society for promoting Theological Education at Harvard College, held their annual meeting in Boston, on Tuesday, August 29, when they chose their officers and transacted the usual business of the society. The annual discourse was delivered on Sunday evening, August 27, at the church in Federal street, by the Rev. Dr. Harris, from Matthew xiii. 51, 52. "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Ordination.—In Dublin, N. H. Wednesday, Sept. 6, was ordained, Rev. Levi W. Leonard, over the Church and congregation in that place. Sermon, by Rev. Dr. Ware, of Cambridge. The names of the other officiating ministers we have not learned.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received from Mickros the information we requested, and upon mature consideration find it necessary, for the reasons we before suggested, to decline the publication of his papers.

We hope our readers will think themselves compensated for the twenty days' delay in the publication of this number—for which we are unable to offer any adequate apology—by the sixteen pages extra which it contains. We will endeavour to take care that the same occasion of delay shall not occur in time to come.

END OF NO. 4.—VOL. II.

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

NEW SERIES—No. 11.

For September and October, 1820.

THOUGHTS ON TRUE AND FALSE RELIGION.

Considered merely in relation to this world, there is no subject, on which it is more important for us to hold correct opinions, than the subject of religion. There are no questions of such interest to us, as those which it proposes to answer. There is no department of knowledge, in which ignorance and error so essentially affect the character and condition of individuals and of society. Determine the relative degrees of virtue and happiness, in different communities; and you will have determined the relative degrees, in which the influence of correct religious principle is felt; and, on the other hand, false notions of religion, ignorance and superstition will be found in nearly the same proportions as vice and misery.

There is abundant proof of the fact just stated. We find evidence of it in the condition of the most polished heathen nations, the Greeks and Romans. There is indeed a deceptive glare cast around them by the vivid splendors of art and genius; and we are liable to be deluded likewise by a vulgar, school-boy admiration of virtues, which never existed but in fancy; and of which scarce any other show of evidence is to be found, but in some high-sounding epithets, used by such writers as Livy in compliment to their countrymen; and interpreted at the present day in conformity to our own notions of moral excellence, and not those of a heathen. But putting aside these causes of error, if we examine into the real condition of those ancient nations, we shall find melancholy and decisive evidence of the fact maintained. It will gather round us from every side. Their religion, erroneous, imbecile and corrupting as it was, will be found a true index of

the virtue and happiness which existed ; and the want of some higher principle of moral conduct, than it was capable of furnishing, will appear in the examples of profligacy, injustice and cruelty, which will rise in dark masses to our view ; in the general want of personal security and peace ; in the destitution of domestic comfort and those charities which make life dear to us, and in the loosely compacted machinery and irregular movements of every organized society.

We may look next to the dark ages ; and compare the state of religion, though that religion was called Christianity, with the state of morals and safety and happiness. We may look for further evidence of the truth maintained to Spain and Italy ; or to Turkey and Hindostan. We may consider the tremendous lesson which France has been giving to mankind ; and we may then turn to England and our own country ; and we shall every where perceive the same general correspondence between the notions which prevail concerning religion, whether true or false, and the condition, good or bad, of those by whom they are held.

But we need not recur to the observation of what has been, in order to prove, that the direct influence of religion, properly understood, is in the highest degree beneficial. We have only to consider what must be the operation of the truths which it makes known. For the happiness and consolation of man, it teaches him that he is the creature and care of infinite goodness. To support and animate him in all virtue, it is continually inculcating the truth, that God has made him the arbiter of his own happiness or misery ; and that virtue and happiness are the same. It makes him know and feel that the more good he communicates, the more he enjoys ; and that benevolence, and generosity, and self-devotion are his interest. It places distinctly before him the fact, that there are pleasures of two kinds ; some, which of themselves, by their mere excess and repetition, exhaust the power of enjoyment, and make the soul 'embody and embrute,' leaving it at last without any sensibility but to pain ; and others, which invigorate the faculties, which enlarge our capacities for happiness, whose enjoyment is but a step to higher enjoyment, and this to continue forever. The influence of such religion upon the intellectual is scarcely less than upon the moral part of man. By preserving the mind pure from vice, it preserves its faculties in free and healthy exercise. The truths which it teaches are in themselves the most important ; and they have a bearing upon almost every other interesting speculation. The moral taste which it cultivates is intimately connected with the taste for every other sort of beauty ; and the enlargement and elevation, produced by the habitual contemplation of the infinite, the invis-

ible, and the remote, will manifest themselves in all the operations and purposes of the mind.

Nor are we to estimate the power of religion in a community merely by its direct influence. It affects those who think least of its value. It affects them through public sentiment, by raising the standard of morals, by rendering a certain decorum of manners necessary to any degree of estimation, by the direct action of sympathy with those around them, and by the continual operation of institutions, and modes of thinking and acting, in which the truths of religion are recognized.

But we must not expect a beneficial influence from every thing which is called religion. We must attend to something more than the name; for food and poison have both been called by this name. Religion, considered in the abstract, is a system of truths, and operates upon the mind through faith in these truths. But because these truths are of a nature to yield the most blessed fruits, it does not follow, that a system of opinions, inconsistent with, or contradictory to them, will produce the same effects because men have given the same name to both. If religion be of the highest value, because it affords us as clear notions of the Divinity, as we are capable of receiving; it does not follow that a system is of much value, which confounds our notions of God by unintelligible doctrines respecting his nature. If religion be adapted to produce the most excellent virtues, by holding forth the most powerful motives and sanctions, and requiring that these should be regarded in every moral action; we cannot therefore infer, that the same effect is to be expected from a religion, which grants dispensations and indulgences and pardons for money; or from a religion, which teaches men that the main thing is to perform certain rites and ceremonies, and to regard certain observances; or from a religion, which insists upon the reception of a system of doctrines as the great and sure passport to eternal happiness; and still less from one, which brings virtue into contrast with some other requisition or characteristic; and makes light of the former; and regards it even as a subject of contempt and jealousy in comparison with the latter—denominating all human excellence by some such title, perhaps, as that of *the filthy rags of self-righteousness*. If it be the genuine operation of true religion to produce constant exertion after moral perfectness; because it teaches that good and evil are before us, and that it is for us to choose and attain which we will; we cannot conclude that this will be the operation of a religion, which insists as a fundamental truth upon the doctrine, that we have no moral power, that our condition will not at all depend upon any thing which we may do; but that our eternal happiness or misery has been determined by the pleasure of another being, who has issued his irreversible decrees

without reference to any qualities which he may see in us. True religion is an inestimable blessing, because it teaches that God is the everlasting Friend and Father of his creatures; a God of infinite goodness. But what shall we say of a religion, which teaches that he has formed men, so that they are by nature wholly inclined to all moral evil; that he has determined in consequence to inflict upon the greater part of our race the most terrible punishments; and that unless he has seen fit to place us among the small number of those whom he has chosen out of the common ruin, he will be our eternal enemy, and infinite tormentor; that having hated us from our birth, he will continue to exercise upon us forever his unrelenting and omnipotent hatred. Whatever may be the worth of true religion, it surely does not follow, that this system of blasphemy must be also of great value, and very beneficial in its effects. Yet he must be a very ignorant or a very bold man who will affirm, that the doctrines last stated have not been taught, and very extensively too, as fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

With us Christians, religion is identified with Christianity. We receive the truths which it teaches, not because we are able to establish them by the deductions of our reason, but because we believe them to have been taught by God; because we think that the uncertain deductions of reason have been confirmed by the highest possible authority. But what is Christianity? A very different thing, unquestionably, from what has been the professed religion of far the greater part of Christians. The proposition may appear startling at first sight; but consider the state of Christendom from the fourth century to the sixteenth; and ask yourself, how great was the resemblance between the system of doctrines which prevailed during this period, and the system of truths which was taught by Jesus Christ? Was Christianity the religion of that Church, which, to use the bold language of the Apocalypse, *made itself drunk with the blood of the Saints?* When you are satisfied with regard to its faith, you may then examine the scheme of doctrines developed in the Institutes of Calvin; or rather the same scheme, as it appears perfected in the works of the Westminster Assembly. If any one wholly unacquainted with our religion were told, that this was Christianity; and that the system taught in these books, was to be found in another collection of books, called the New Testament, I believe his surprise would be uncontrollable and unimaginable, when he came to read the New Testament itself, and to understand what is actually taught there.

If what we regard as Christianity, then, be true and valuable, what are we to think of such systems as those just mentioned?

Why do we value Christianity ? Because it gives us assurance of certain truths, which we believe to be of infinite importance. These truths constitute our religion. The character which we attach to them is not to be transferred to any thing different, and still less to any thing contradictory. So far as religion is concerned, these truths, and these alone, have operated to improve the condition of men. Whatever is opposed to them, whether it be taught under the name of Christianity or not, is opposed to Christianity. Just in proportion as we regard the latter as valuable, shall we regard the former as pernicious. Just in proportion as we are desirous of promoting the influence of true religion, shall we be desirous of removing all those false doctrines, by which its influence is counteracted and destroyed ; and counteracted and destroyed the more effectually, because they have assumed its name and authority.

There cannot be different systems of equal value. There are not two opposite kinds of truth in religion. Nothing can be more irrational, than a strong attachment to any particular mode of faith, or form of worship, accompanied with indifference about its correctness, and indisposition to inquire into its real character. Nothing can be more loose or inconsistent than his opinions, who thinks religion a great good, but does not think it worth while to examine and determine what particular doctrines religion teaches. If certain truths are of infinite importance, the errors opposed to them are in the highest degree pernicious ; and he who maintains the latter, as if they were of the same nature with the former, is committing a very serious mistake indeed.

It is true, that the worst errors respecting Christianity do not always produce their natural effects. Perhaps they never have produced their full and complete effects. The essential truths of our religion appear so prominently and so distinctly in the revelation which God has given us, they are so conformable to our reason, and so agreeable to our natural sentiments, that they have never been entirely obscured and forgotten among Christians. Their operation, therefore, has been counteracted and diminished, but not entirely prevented. Opposite truths and errors have existed in the same mind, and mutually controlled each other's influence. Nay, in many minds, these errors seem to have existed merely in the form of speculation ; and to have been met and overborne, whenever they tended to any practical result, by natural good sense, correct moral principles, and sincere piety. The practical religion of men is often a very different thing from their professed religion ; or from that contained in the creeds of the sect to which they consider themselves as belonging. Nor may we ever expect to see the whole operation and perfect

results of any false opinions, when those by whom they are maintained, live intermixed with others holding opposite doctrines, whose numbers and character are such as to command respect. It is the tendency of the different opinions of different men to act upon and modify each other. A man without any religion will be a very different person, if he live in the midst of a religious community, from what he would have been in a society of men equally destitute of religious principle with himself; and the case is similar with him whose religion is erroneous. The characters of men are, without doubt, affected by many other causes beside the errors of the religious creed which they may profess.

We believe, and we rejoice to believe, that there have been men of excellent virtue in every different faith. But we must recollect, that in estimating the virtue, or rather the merit of individuals, we are continually making allowance for their difference of faith; for the different degrees in which they have attained a knowledge of true religion and of the character of its requirements. We do not expect certain virtues from men under the influence of certain errors. In giving the tribute of our admiration to the moral excellence of Socrates or of Cicero, we have to remember, that Socrates and Cicero were heathens. In going back a century or two, if we should look without horror upon some who have passed even for saints, we must recollect, that they believed religious persecution to be a duty. We are continually applying the same principle, often perhaps unconsciously, in judging of the characters of those whom we regard as holding great errors; and frequently where such errors are entertained, though we may find much to praise, we find also, if not much to censure, at least much to regret.

True, there have been excellent men whose belief on the most important subjects has been very erroneous. But if any one should infer from this fact, that every different faith is equally adapted to produce such men, and that there is no ground therefore in their practical effects for preferring one to another, he would reason in the same manner, as if, having observed that some men do retain their health and live long in insalubrious situations and unhealthy employments, he should conclude that one climate or mode of life is as favourable to health as another. The constitution of man, and the testimony of experience would be no more overlooked in the latter inference than in the former. When it can be shown that men's opinions do not influence their conduct, that there is an entire divorce between their intellect and their principles of action; that men do not perform certain things, because they believe it their interest or duty to perform them; and that religion, which has been regarded as so active a principle in the production of both good and evil, is really nothing more

than an inert subject of speculation ; then it may be inferred, not indeed that it is wholly unimportant whether our religion be true or false, but that it is of little more importance, than whether we believe the system of Newton or Ptolemy respecting the material universe.

To false religion we are indebted for persecutors, and zealots and bigots ; and perhaps human depravity has assumed no forms, at once more odious and despicable, than those in which it has appeared in such men. I will say nothing of persecution ; it has passed away, I trust, forever ; and torture will be no more inflicted, and murder no more committed, under pretence of extending the spirit and influence of Christianity. But the temper which produced it still remains; its parent bigotry is still in existence ; and what is there more adapted to excite thorough disgust, than the disposition, the feelings, the motives, the kind of intellect and degree of knowledge, discovered by some of those who are pretending to be the sole defenders and patrons of religious truth in this unhappy world, and the true and exclusive heirs of all the mercy of God ? It is a particular misfortune, that where gross errors in religion prevail, the vices of which I speak have shewn themselves especially in the clergy ; and that we find them ignorant, narrow-minded, presumptuous, and, as far as they have it in their power, oppressive and injurious. The disgust which this character, in those who appear as ministers of religion, naturally produces, is often transferred to Christianity itself. It ought to be associated only with that form of religion by which those vices are occasioned. But such mistakes are continually made ; because men do not discriminate between the different systems of faith, which have passed under the name of Christianity ; nor recognize the very different effects which they are adapted to produce.

It is indeed questionable, whether the direct influence of the errors which have been connected with Christianity, upon those by whom they are held, is equally mischievous with their indirect consequences. They are, it cannot be doubted, among the most operative causes of unbelief ; and of what probably is much more common among us, and what we have so much reason to lament, indifference and skepticism in respect to religion. A system of doctrines is presented to men, at which their minds revolt; and they are told that this is Christianity. A *gospel* is proposed to them, whose first aspect belies its name. If they are prevented from rejecting our religion altogether, by perceiving something of that character of divinity which belongs to it, and cannot be wholly obscured, by the authority of so many excellent men who have regarded it as the foundation of their hopes, and by some

knowledge of the evidences of its truth; yet still such misrepresentations will not be without their effect. Men will in consequence regard religion as a subject of habitual doubt and perplexity, an irksome topic of contemplation, one from which their minds will be always ready to escape. It will thus be prevented from mingling with their thoughts; it will not direct their common purposes; it will not influence their affections; it will not establish its authority in their hearts. Nay such will often be the case, even when, for want of knowing any thing better, they have at last brought themselves to assent to that form of religion, in which alone it has been distinctly presented to their minds.

The extravagant errors which have been forced into an unnatural union with Christianity, may be traced back to ages, from which we consent to receive no other of our opinions. They derived their origin from men, whose speculations on every other subject would command at the present day but little deference. He would be regarded only with wonder or ridicule, who should think it worth while to quote Athanasius, or Augustine, or Calvin, or Turretin, as an authority upon any topic, except the peculiar theological doctrines which they maintained. The mysteries of the later Platonists, with the exception of the mystery of the Trinity, are at the present day treated with not much respect; and though the schoolmen have been our masters, we think it little worth while to study their writings, and forget to whom we have been indebted. Thus it is, that religious doctrines, which had their birth in ages of ignorance, of false principles, and false reasoning, still remain in full vigour; though all the rest of the brotherhood of errors of which they made a part, has long since perished. They remain disconnected from all the modes of conception and habits of mind, among which they had their origin. They remain standing insulated and unsupported, except by their connexion with each other. They are at variance with all the knowledge, and all the opinions and sentiments of our age upon every related subject. If we should take up any one of the standard authors upon these subjects, any one of those, whose reputation is highest, as a writer on natural religion, on morals, on the science of the human mind, or as skilful in the development of the human character, and in the midst of our reading, should chance to recollect some of the doctrines of technical theology, such as might easily be pointed out, we should at once perceive how strangely they come athwart the whole current of our thoughts, and how irreconcileable they are with all that is best established in human knowledge. We are transferred from the region of all certain or probable truth, from all those topics of contemplation among which the mind loves to dwell, into quite a

new field of speculation, very barren, and desert, and hideous, and lying, if I may so speak, out of the limits of the habitable world. Let any one, while reading the fine arguments, and beautiful illustrations of Paley respecting the goodness of God, bring to mind that doctrine which teaches that this is a ruined world, that the far greater proportion of men are doomed from their birth to inevitable woe, that there is 'a curse of God upon the creatures for our sake;' and that with the exception of a privileged few, who do not contribute much to brighten the prospect, we see nothing about us but sin and its punishments; in the shock which this horrible doctrine will give to all the affections and feelings that fill his mind, he may perceive one proof, among many, of the direct contrariety of which I speak, between what reason and revelation teach, and what has been taught by false theology; between the traditionary doctrines of the latter, and the best conclusions of enlightened philosophy.

But we find that there are many claiming to be exclusively Christians, who are continually insisting that doctrines, such as those to which I have alluded, constitute the essential truths and characteristic features of our religion; and who raise a passionate outcry against all who endeavour to vindicate Christianity from the imputation. The creeds of every established church in Christendom teach such doctrines. The whole body of the clergy in every such church may be divided into three classes—those who heartily believe the doctrines of their creed; the smaller number, I suspect, by far;—those who by repeated efforts, and by carefully limiting their inquiries, have succeeded in silencing their own doubts, and in persuading themselves, that these doctrines admit of a plausible defence—and in the last place, a very considerable number indeed, and perhaps the most injurious to the interests of religion; those who give their solemn assent to the truth of doctrines which they do not believe. And what is the consequence of all this? Let us suppose an acute and intelligent man, occupied either in the affairs of the world, in professional studies, or literary pursuits, and whose habits of life have in consequence been such, as to leave him little leisure to make himself acquainted with the science of theology. Let us suppose that from the circumstances of his situation, some one of those systems of error which have assumed the name of Christianity, should have been continually presented to him as Christianity itself. How is he to determine that this pretension is not founded in truth. How is he to know, that what is publicly announced as the religion of Christ, and what those around him who profess to be best acquainted with the subject, zealously affirm to be the religion of Christ, does not in fact deserve the name?

By such a one as we have supposed, however, the popular system would for the most part hardly be thought to deserve serious attention; especially if he should find, that it was in fact disbelieved by a considerable portion of those whose business it is to teach it. If he should happen to take up some one of those books, which contain an exposition and defence of any of the principal forms of error which our religion has been made to assume, it is easy to imagine with what contempt and weariness, with what wonder and disgust, he would turn over the pages. It is not difficult to conceive how surprisingly trifling and inane, many of those statements, which we theologians are accustomed by courtesy to call arguments, would appear to one familiar with common modes of discussion, and with what may be called the practical reasoning of men. You may have a distinct conception of the state of mind to which I allude, if you will imagine one of the more acute writers in the Edinburgh Review sitting down to the perusal of Jones' Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity, or Magee's book on the Atonement, or any other of a thousand works of a similar character.

Religion is not respected, because it is not understood; because a low, earth-born rival has assumed the name and place of that principle whose origin is from heaven. Can we think it wonderful, that there should be hundreds and thousands in every christian country, who should come to feel little respect for a subject, which has never been fairly presented to their minds, which has always been connected with associations that are offensive or degrading, and about which those have often written and talked the most, who have said nothing but what tended to misrepresent it and expose it to contempt. We see every where the manifest effect of the state of things to which I have adverted. It is not necessary to consider the condition of Catholic countries, where the monstrous corruptions which have been connected with Christianity, have left it scarcely any disciples, except among the lower and more ignorant classes of society. We may see enough of the disastrous consequences of error in Protestant countries, in our own neighbourhood, among those whom we meet in the common intercourse of life. From the causes which have been mentioned, we may account in a great measure for the melancholy phenomenon, that of the most eminent literary men of Scotland for the last sixty or seventy years, so many have been open enemies or very doubtful friends of Christianity. Turn over the pages of the most popular and able literary journal of our times; which exercises so much influence upon the minds of thousands of readers, and than which few other publications will tend more to mark and distinguish the present age;

—you cannot but be struck, I do not say with the infidelity which has occasionally appeared in a few articles, but with a characteristic far more deserving of notice, and which suggests thoughts more serious—it is the general exclusion of every religious topic ; and of nearly all direct reference to Christianity. You would produce scarcely a perceptible change in the character of the work, by striking out every thing which implies that such a religion as Christianity exists in the world. Whatever relates to the highest interests and noblest speculations of man, is excluded ; as if these subjects lay out of the sphere of all true and useful knowledge ; nay, as if there would be something of impertinence and folly in introducing topics borrowed from religion, into writings really intended to influence the sentiments, opinions, and conduct of the more intelligent classes of society. Whether a man believe the truths of religion or not, he must have an intellect singularly constituted, if he affect to despise them. But the doctrines of false theology have long outlived the time when they could command any respect, except from those whose minds have been disciplined to their reception ; and if we will insist on mistaking the latter for the former, it is not strange that such effects should be produced as we see existing.

But the subject presents itself under a still more gloomy aspect. What must be the effect of any of those systems of faith which have assumed the name of orthodoxy, when urged upon the reception of the young. What must be the effect when such a system with its hideous features, and squalid with all the barbarism of a rude and ignorant age, is obtruded upon a mind of warm affections, of unperverted and undisciplined feelings, of quick sensibility, and impatient and hasty and petulant in its judgments. Take such a young man, and persuade him, if you can, to read through the standards of doctrine which your church has sanctioned ; no matter whether that church be episcopal or presbyterian, and no matter whether your standard be the Westminster Catechisms and Confession, or the Thirty-nine Articles. Tell him that this is your religion, and must be his. Lay before him your aggregate of unintelligible doctrines concerning God, and of doctrines which are but too intelligible concerning the condition and prospects of man ; and tell him that the creed which you put into his hands, contains a full exposition of all that is consolatory and delightful and lovely and glorious in religion. If you can bring him to contemplate and understand what you have laid before him, have you any doubt with what loathing and horror he will regard your religion. It is true indeed, that precisely such a case as I have supposed, is not likely to occur. False notions of religion are, for the most part, communicated at an age when they are but imperfectly un-

derstood, and but little attended to; and before the understanding has learnt to trust its own decisions. They gradually open upon the minds of the young. Their effect, therefore, though similar to what has been described, is not commonly so immediate and striking. It is true also, that as the mind, through the merciful provision of nature, can accommodate itself to almost any circumstances, so it may in time be broken down to tolerate almost any belief. As life advances, various causes may reconcile men to a system of faith, which, according to their different tempers, they had at first regarded with neglect and derision, or with doubt and aversion. But, in the mean time, the character has been formed without religion. The sensual passions have been indulged, vicious habits, and low and selfish feelings have been contracted, the mind has been debased; and the change produced by adopting an erroneous system of faith, is often but little more than superficial and exterior.

The different systems of religious error which have prevailed among Christians, have usually been employed as very efficacious instruments, in effecting the worldly and criminal purposes of those by whom they have been most zealously supported. They have been made to pander to the ambition and vices of unholy men, pretending to be ministers of God and Christ. They have been brought into intimate union with corrupt civil institutions; and when guarded by the sword of the law, they have liberally repaid the support which they have received, by employing in their turn the terrors and artifices of superstition to humble the minds of men. True religion can be the minister of nothing but good. All its sanctions and motives are directed to this end. But false religion may be made an agent in the production of almost any sort of evil. It is of its very essence to misemploy and misdirect the sanctions which it holds forth. In proof of what has been said, it is not necessary to look back to the period, when a despotism the most odious and degrading was established over Europe under the name of the Church of Christ; and when the pretended authority of our religion was made a shelter for rank and rotten iniquity. It is better to regard the more moderate evils of our own time, and to take examples, which if not quite so impressive, have a more practical bearing. In every country of Europe, there are without doubt many, who regard religion merely as a part of the political machinery of the state, and a powerful instrument in preserving and strengthening the existing distinctions of society; who, on the one side, view its establishments as a means of power and patronage, and, on the other, as a source of rank and wealth. The style and temper in which the national religion is defended, often borrow their char-

acter from the kind of estimation in which it is held. There is a worldly, political, interested zeal shown in its defence, which betrays an origin very different from the spirit of Christianity. It is a zeal for their own profit, and not for the happiness of their fellow creatures, which engages men in its support. Its corruptions are strenuously defended. All examination and all improvement are angrily repelled. The work of reformation must not be begun; for if it be suffered to begin, who can tell where it will stop? Who can tell how many profitable and convenient evils will be removed, or how many habits and customs and indulgences, which are now tolerated, might be marked out for reprobation? In the defenders therefore of the established faith, in such writers for instance as Horsley, we often find a tone of authority, the insolence of artificial rank, and that gross and impudent unfairness, on which few men will venture, unless they know that there is a strong party ready to cheer them as victors, whatever may be their real success. If its defenders do not write altogether in the style of those controversialists of former days, who knew that the executioner was at hand to give them aid; they nevertheless write like men, who feel that they have the power of the state on their side, and who are far more solicitous to maintain than to justify what is established. In such a state of things, true and useful learning ceases in a great measure to be cultivated by the clergy. Those of them who make their creed a matter of conscience, often find it safest not to examine too curiously the history or the doctrines of the faith which they are required to profess. Their creed presents itself to them on every side as a check to all liberal inquiry in the studies peculiar to their station. Nor is much inquiry found necessary; for their church with its established institutions, forms and doctrines, relies for support on a power, which affords it a very different sort of aid, from what the learning and talents of its ministers might furnish. But a deficiency of learning and talents is often far from being the worst characteristic of the clergy of such an establishment. When, as is commonly the case, its offices are considered principally as means of affording patronage, or of securing rank and emolument, men who possess very different qualifications from those necessary in their proper discharge, will be most successful in obtaining them. A large proportion of the professed ministers of religion will then be found not merely ignorant and inert, but destitute of religious principles and feelings, without belief, it may be, in any faith, worthless and profligate. In the character of a great part of the French clergy during the last century, when the highest offices of the church were filled by the nominations of the atheist Regent,

Duke of Orleans, and of the brutal debauchee, Louis XV. we may perceive an example of what has been stated. In the contempt and utter discredit which such clergymen must have cast upon religion, the great principle that holds human passions in restraint, and unites man to man, we may perceive a cause which alone is almost sufficient to account for the awful disruption of society that followed. But long before the evils of a corrupt establishment have become so glaring, it is easy to perceive its effects upon the minds of the laity. Their respect for religion, when not merely assumed as a matter of policy, becomes in a great part ceremonious, exterior and worldly, the respect of those who mistake what is in fact nothing more than mere vulgar pride in the dignity of their church, for something corresponding to religious sentiment and principle. It is a respect for a particular form of faith and worship, produced very much by its associations with antiquity, and solemn buildings, and imposing ceremonies, and high rank, and the power of the state. Nay, where ignorance and superstition gain complete establishment, as in Spain, all regard for religion may degenerate at last into mere bigotry to a name, accompanied with the mechanical and perfectly unmeaning observance of appointed ceremonies.

Among an ignorant and superstitious people, there may be a certain traditionary and exterior respect, and even zeal for their religion, while the ministers of that religion are regarded with dislike and contempt. "With all this attachment to forms and ceremonies," says an enlightened traveller, speaking of the religion of Spain, "it might naturally be expected that the clergy would be looked upon as objects of veneration; but as far as I can judge, this is by no means the case. The language held towards the ministers of religion is not always respectful, and is sometimes scurrilous.*" This singular phenomenon exists, in a greater or less degree, in other parts of Europe. But it cannot exist long, where any considerable degree of intellectual improvement prevails. As soon as the mind ceases to be the mere slave of habits and prejudices, on which reason has never acted, one of its first rude operations will be to transfer those sentiments, with which it has regarded the ministers of religion, to religion itself, and to associate them with it. Respect for religion can hardly exist in an enlightened community, separate from respect for its ministers. In some parts of our own country, it is a truth not to be concealed, that the clergy have lost a portion of that estimation in which they have been, and in which it is most desirable that they should be held. Where this has taken place, the

*Jacob's Travels in the South of Spain, p. 93.

fact is to be ascribed, I believe, partly to the nature of the doctrines which they have maintained, so abhorrent, in many cases, to the reason and common feelings of men, and so discordant with the present state of knowledge and intellectual improvement; and partly, though I say it with extreme reluctance, to the traits of character, which a belief of these doctrines is adapted to produce. The fact itself, has been strikingly exemplified in a neighbouring state; and it is, I think, very apparent, that some of the principal, if not the sole causes of it were those which have been stated. So operative indeed have been those causes, that a demand for greater religious toleration was found a very effective means of advancing to power the party which now prevails. In some of our commonwealths, there has been manifested a disregard, amounting to enmity, of the comfort, the respectability, and even the rights of the clergy. The rulers of the day have done what was in their power, by their constitutions and laws, to desecrate and unchristianize the state. They seem to have unlearnt in some new empirical philosophy, the truth, which forty centuries have been teaching, that religious principle is the necessary support of government. If one were disposed to melancholy anticipations respecting our country, I do not know where he might look for a more alarming prognostic of evil, than to the disinclination which has been manifested to make suitable provision for the constant religious instruction of the people. But this error, originating, partly, at least, in temporary and accidental causes, such as have been stated, will, we may hope, be hereafter corrected. It has been justified only by a rash and extravagant application to practice of certain abstract, speculative principles, the nature of which has been very rudely apprehended, and their necessary limitations and conditions very imperfectly understood. Corrupt religious establishments have undoubtedly been connected with bad governments; but it does not follow from this, that every government must not rest for support upon religion well or ill understood. To every government, this support is in fact necessary; human society itself has no other basis; and every government ought therefore, if from no higher and holier motive, to make provision that religion shall be taught in the best manner possible. If the religious errors which have prevailed, have contributed directly or indirectly, to prevent the accomplishment of this object, it may be reckoned as among their most melancholy consequences. But I turn to consider the subject before me, in still a different view.

When the religion publicly taught is of such a character, that reason turns away from it, and refuses to acknowledge its authority, it can have but a weak hold on the minds of the more intelli-

gent, and exercise but little influence upon their habitual affections and daily conduct. But there is a spurious sort of religion of the imagination and of temporary sentiment, which sometimes supplies the place of the religion of the understanding. Some of the infidel writers of Germany are willing to admire Christianity as a beautiful fable. There is such desolation and heartlessness in utter skepticism, that we are ready to turn from it even to a shadowy, unsubstantial image of the truth. The resemblance may indeed be preferred to the reality ; for if it has far less of joy and hope, it is also far less solemn and awful and authoritative. Where real living religion does not exercise its permanent, unremitting influence, we may often find in its stead a poetical, theatrical, mystical religion, which may furnish themes for the expression of fine sentiment, and the indulgence of transient emotion; which delights to talk about sacrifices, but forgets duties, and has nothing to do with the unnoticed patience of obscure suffering, the unpraised self-denials of humble goodness, the strong and silent feelings of habitual piety ; or indeed with any virtues, but what are splendid and popular and fit for exhibition. It is such a religion which the authoress of Delphine has celebrated with her passionate and enthusiastic eloquence. It is this religion which the writer of the Philosophical Dictionary, not to mention any work more infamous, could introduce into his tragedies ; and it is for such a religion that Moore and Byron may compose sacred songs. Nobody, I trust, will so far misunderstand me, as to suppose it my intention to deny, that the sentiments expressed by such writers are sometimes very beautiful and correct. I only mean, that there is a religion, not of the understanding, and not of the heart, which terminates in the expression of fine sentiments.

Such then, as I have described, and so great, are the evils which result from false notions of religion. They can be removed only by establishing the truth ; and to this end, the truth must be earnestly avowed and defended, with a deep-felt conviction of its value to mankind. It is indeed an unpleasant thing to encounter prejudices, however mischievous, when among those who hold them, there are many very estimable for their virtues, who consider our professions as insincere, and our labours as profane ; and who therefore regard us with much harsher feelings of dislike, than common collisions of opinion are apt to produce. But allowing this to be as great an evil as you will, it must still be weighed against those evils which it is your purpose to remove ; and it is but dust in the balance. There is no way in which the truth can be made to prevail, except by the direct avowal of it, by the forcible and full statement of the arguments by which it is

supported; and by a close encounter with opposite errors. Except the truth be clearly stated and defended, it is not easy to see how it can be made to prevail on any disputed subject; but there is certainly no other way, in which you can hope to remove prejudices, so widely spread, and so obstinately maintained, as those respecting religion. Yet this encounter of truth with error, is religious controversy, of the ill consequences of which we sometimes hear so much, both from those who are entitled to high respect, as well as from those who are not. But it is a fact, though one not generally recognized, that in many cases, the manly, well-tempered, steady avowal of the truth, tends far more to repress, than to excite, the bitter and angry passions of our opponents. Look at the great change in the style of attack and controversy, as directed against Unitarian Christians, in our own country, which has been produced during the past year or two, almost by this cause alone. It has its effect upon all honest and fair minds; for the tones of deep earnestness, and strong conviction, can hardly be mistaken or misrepresented. It has its effect upon minds of a different character; for where there is no great superiority of vantage ground, reproach and insult are found in time to be but poor weapons against that sword, with which truth is furnished 'from the armoury of God.'

The real practical opinions of wise and virtuous men of different sects correspond, without doubt, much more nearly than their creeds. But as to the principal of these creeds, which determine, in a greater or less degree, the faith of the generality, it is idle to turn away our eyes, and endeavour to keep out of sight their direct opposition to each other, in regard to doctrines the most momentous. Between the extremes of truth and error, we may find also every grade of professed belief, in proportion as men have examined, more or less thoroughly, and with more or less honest freedom. But while these various, wide and most important differences exist in the professed faith of Christians, the minds of many will be confounded and lost in the search after truth, if those who are able do not step forward to assist and guide their inquiries. It is very desirable that men should give up their old errors; for these errors have been exceedingly pernicious; but there is danger lest he, whose faith has rested principally upon authority, and who has learnt to doubt and dismiss one doctrine after another, should begin to distrust the whole system of religion. There is danger that he will be unable to distinguish for himself between its essential truths, and those errors of human origin, which have been so blended with it; and that in rejecting the latter, he will at the same time lose his reverence for the former. In order to prevent this consequence, it is

necessary for the defenders of real religion to separate, and to distinguish most clearly, those truths from these errors ; to draw a broad and deep line of demarcation between them, and to render evident the essential opposition in their character and effects. It is necessary for them to make it felt, to place it out of dispute, that it is not any childish and petulant love of innovation, nor any contemptible desire of attracting notice by assailing men's prejudices, but that it is their interest in true religion, their conviction of the value of Christianity, and their desire of promoting its influence, which are their motives in opposing doctrines, by which, as they think, its value has been obscured, and its influence obstructed. They must show what they maintain, and why they maintain it, what they oppose, and why they oppose it. They must explain themselves, prudently and wisely as they may, but very earnestly and explicitly.

There is, beyond doubt, great reason to rejoice in what has been already effected toward vindicating the true character of Christianity. But even in those communities, such as our own, where it is best understood, much, very much, remains to be done, before correct notions of religion can be fully developed, and exhibited in all their relations and bearings, and before our religion can be distinctly recognized, and received by men in all its purity, and divinity, and power. Old errors meet and embarrass us on every side. One false doctrine retreats upon another for support. There are many difficulties to be removed ; many inquiries to be answered ; and many honest doubts to be solved, which have their origin not in the nature of things, but in long established prejudices. The light is as yet mixed and cloudy. The truth itself, in many minds, rests upon a foundation not perfectly secure, and requiring to be strengthened. There are many ready to believe it, and who do believe it, but whose faith requires to be enlightened and confirmed. There are many, whose opinions, though prevailingly correct, are, in a considerable degree, undefined, hesitating and inconsistent. There are others still in a state of painful uncertainty. Under these circumstances, there is a call for instruction and guidance, which those who are able to afford them, are not at liberty to decline answering. Our fellow christians are in need of such knowledge, as may enable them to attain distinct and full conceptions of religion, and to embrace it with a satisfied mind and earnest faith. If it be in our power to dispense the bread of instruction and life, it will surely be our guilt, if we suffer them to complain, that they ' look up and are not fed.' But in communicating this knowledge, there is not a step we can advance, without encountering one prejudice or another. There is nothing we can teach,

which will not be contradicted. There is nothing we can propose, which will not be cavilled at. There is no information we can communicate, which will not be disputed. Every plan, apparently the most unexceptionable, for advancing religious knowledge will meet with opposition, for as this knowledge advances, some favourite error must fall before it. Let us consider one example. For the last century, there have been reiterated and strong complaints of the imperfection, errors, and obscurity, of the common English version of the Bible. There is a series of authorities to this purpose, collected by Archbishop Newcome,* no mean authority himself. They are taken from writers of different communions and belief, some of them of the first eminence as critics, and theologians, and all of them more or less distinguished. To those whom he has quoted, many more of a similar character might easily be added ; and it may be doubted, whether there is a name of any weight, to be placed in the opposite scale. In England, there has been a call from within the church, and from without, for what Bishop Lowth has spoken of as "that NECESSARY work, a new translation, or a revision of the present translation of the Holy Scriptures," by public authority. And how much has been effected in consequence ? Every body knows what answer must be made—Nothing. The jealousy of all change has stood in the way of all improvement. Those who have felt that they, personally, might hazard something, and could gain nothing by any alteration, seem to have cared little, whether religion might gain any thing or not. Even in our country, where it is unsupported by public authority, the version of King James' translators, erroneous as it is, and in considerable portions of it, scarcely intelligible, has attained the same reputation and currency as in England. It is the only version in common use, the only one distributed by our Bible Societies, the only one read in our pulpits ; and till within a few years, no other version of any part of the Scriptures could have been readily procured in our country. It seems to be forgotten by many, that it is merely a faulty translation, and to be regarded with the same reverence, as if it were the very original of the holy writings. True zeal for the Scriptures would make us earnest indeed to furnish the best, the very best, means of understanding them correctly and fully. Nobody can well doubt, that this would be its natural operation. But there is a pretended zeal for the Scriptures, which has shown itself in a quite different manner ; and has opposed

*In his work entitled "An Historical View of the English Biblical Translations : the expediency of revising, by authority, our present Translation : and the means of executing such a revision."

directly or indirectly every effort for the purpose. It is but one instance out of many, of the resistance, which all attempts to communicate religious knowledge have met with, and will meet with hereafter. Nothing can be effected without a struggle and a contest; and he who has a philosophical or an epicurean dislike to controversy, who is fearful lest it should mar his temper, or put his dignity to hazard, or endanger his reputation, or disturb his quiet, may assure himself, that he is not such an instrument as is required in the work of enlightening and reforming his fellow men. The Sybarites might as well have been called in to assist in establishing the fortunes of the Eternal City.

But there are those, whom it is not to be wished should engage in the attempt to purify our religion. There are men, intemperate, imprudent, distinguished by their levity of judgment, ready to believe, that the further they remove from established opinions, the more they show themselves free from vulgar prejudices, fond of paradoxes, valuing opinions by their novelty and not by their correctness, taking pleasure in presenting even the truth in a form the most offensive to their opponents, unable to recognize the different appearances which the same essential belief may assume, according to the various characters of different minds, understanding little, and valuing less, the judgment and toleration with which the soundest principles are sometimes to be avowed, and having for their principal object to gain a worthless sort of notoriety, on the ground of being original thinkers, when this notoriety can be gained without loss or hazard. They commonly agree with the defenders of true religion, if they agree at all, only in attacking certain errors, and not in maintaining the great truths of our faith. But the latter is the main object, ever to be kept in view; and those errors are to be controverted, because they are inconsistent with these truths. Such auxiliaries are more to be feared than any opponents. They resemble the predatory bands which sometimes accompany the march of an army, exciting ill-will and dread in a friendly country, and of no use in that of an enemy. Happily the defenders of the truth among us, have hitherto had little reason to complain of such assistance.

There is, it may be believed, a Reformation of religion now taking place of not less importance, than that to which the name has been so long appropriated. The purposes of God, in giving Christianity to men, have not yet been fully developed. Without doubt, its truths, notwithstanding the mass of errors with which they have been encumbered, have been continually operating to raise the character, and improve the condition of man. But, I trust, the providence of God, in conferring this great

blessing upon our race, looked far forward, to ages much beyond our own. There are even now indications of a period, when the truths, and even the evidences of our religion, shall be much better understood than at present. But it is strange, it may be said, that a revelation from God, should have been so long mingled with so much human error. You think it strange then, that he did not, by one vast miracle, annihilate in a moment, all those errors respecting religion and duty, which for thousands of years had been accumulating in the world; that he did not sweep away at once, all prejudices from the minds of men, so that his truth might find unresisted entrance, and hold undisputed authority; and that he did not afterward, by a perpetual act of his power, so strengthen their understandings, and so restrain their passions and follies, that no false opinions should, in any time to come, be ever introduced and maintained. Examine the history of opinions, and you will find that errors, either in religion or philosophy, which have once generally prevailed, are very slowly removed and superseded. Common modes of conception, and the popular belief, are transmitted from one generation to another, like the traditionary customs of the east. However unreasonable they may be, it is, for the most part, only by a very gradual process, that they are modified and corrected. The men of one generation are the instructers of the next. Coming ignorant into the world, we are compelled first to receive what our predecessors may teach us; to believe, under the direction of others, before we can exercise our own judgment; and when our instructers have been in error, it takes us a long time to discover the fact, and there are few who are able to discover it at all. The world is slow and dull in unlearning its prejudices. False doctrines which sprang up long before the introduction of Christianity, subsequently became connected with it, shooting their branches among its truths, and twining close around them, so as almost to conceal them from view, with their rank and poisonous luxuriance. The same false doctrines still remain flourishing. In opposing the errors of Christians, we are in fact often opposing only the errors of heathen philosophy, a little disguised, and somewhat modified, by time and circumstances. That so much error should have been incorporated with Christianity, or rather, that Christians should have fallen into so many errors on the subject of religion, for that is the true mode of stating the fact, does not seem very difficult to be accounted for, when we consider how much there is in the intellectual, and still more in the moral imperfections of man, which may lead him to embrace readily, false conceptions of his highest relations and duties; when we acquaint ourselves with the erroneous doctrines in phi-

losophy, religion and morals, which prevailed throughout the civilized world, when our religion was introduced ; and when we further have a distinct conception of the fact just stated ; how very slow and reluctant are the changes, which take place in the speculative opinions of large bodies of men, even under the operation of the most powerful causes. That men should retain their errors in opposition to the clearest discoveries of revelation, was not more wonderful eighteen centuries ago, than it is at the present day. It is not more wonderful, than that they should retain them in opposition to the clearest discoveries of reason.

The dark ages were the triumph and consummation of the errors and vices, which were in the world when Christianity was introduced. Our religion struggled against them and delayed their progress ; and our religion at last delivered men from the slavery in which they were enthralled. It is to the spirit of Christianity, that the regeneration of Europe is to be ascribed. There were men, who if they had but imperfect notions of the real character of God's revelation, yet felt the power of some of its truths ; and these were the men who made successful resistance to the evils by which the world was oppressed. Without that elevation and energy of mind which the belief of immortality inspires, without those motives which Christianity alone affords, without that strong feeling of right and wrong which christian morals alone produce, and without that spirit of self-devotion which is the spirit of our religion, I know not how the deliverance of mankind from the reign of darkness could have been effected. I know not what better hope there would have been for Europe, than there is now for Turkey ; or why it might not have continued to lie in the same state of degradation, moral and intellectual, in which almost all Asia has lain for at least two thousand years. Since its commencement, the work of improvement has been continually carried forward ; and we now breathe a free air, and enjoy a blessed light, such as were never known before. But the work of improvement has been an arduous and severe struggle, a bitter conflict. The errors of men on the most important subjects have been in strict alliance with their pride, their passions, their interest and their vices ; and they have altogether maintained their ground with determined perseverance. Our religious and moral improvement has been purchased by severe thought and laborious investigation, by high-minded sacrifices of worldly hopes, by a generous contempt of reproach and persecution, by tears and blood. Wise men have spent themselves in painful and thankless labors, and holy men have suffered and died to procure for us the privileges which we enjoy. In tracing the melancholy history of our race, it is to such characters that

we must turn for consolation. They give us pledges, on which we may rely of the worth of man. They have followed the track of pure splendor, in which their great master ascended to heaven. They have carried on the grand scheme of moral reformation which he began, against similar opposition to what he encountered. They have continued the work of glory and suffering, which he committed to his apostles. They have purchased ingratitude at the same price, which saints and philosophers had paid before. It is delightful to remember, that there have been men, who, in the cause of truth and virtue, have made no compromises for their own advantage or safety; who have recognized 'the hardest duty as the highest;' who, conscious of the possession of great talents, have relinquished all the praise that was within their grasp, all the applause, which they might have so liberally received, if they had not thrown themselves in opposition to the errors and vices of their fellow men, and have been content to take obloquy and insult instead; who have approached to lay on the altar of God 'their last infirmity.' They, without doubt, have felt that deep conviction of having acted right, which supported the martyred philosopher of Athens, when he asked "What disgrace is it to me, if others are unable to judge of me, or to treat me as they ought?"* There is something very solemn and sublime in the feeling, produced by considering, how differently these men have been estimated by their contemporaries, from the manner in which they are regarded by God. We perceive the appeal which lies from the ignorance, the folly, and the iniquity of man, to the throne of Eternal Justice. A storm of calumny and reviling has too often pursued them through life, and continued, when they could no longer feel it, to beat upon their graves. But it is no matter. They had gone where all who have suffered, and all who have triumphed, in the same noble cause, receive their reward; but where the wreath of the martyr is more glorious than that of the conqueror.†

* — εμοι δε τι αισχρον το ετερους μη δυνασθαι περι εμου τα δικαια μητε γνωναι, μητε ποιησαι.

† Such examples Milton delighted to contemplate and follow; and it was the contemplation of such human examples, which produced the inspiration of the following passage.

> Servant of God, well done; well hast thou fought
> The better fight, who single hast maintained
> Against revolted multitudes the cause
> Of truth; * * * * *
> And for the testimony of truth hast borne
> Universal reproach, far worse to bear
> Than violence; for this was all thy care,
> To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
> Judged thee perverse.

There is no sufficient support for good morals ; there is no security for the common blessings of civilized life ; there is no power adequate to raise the condition of man, and to remove the vices and miseries which press so heavily upon human society, except correct religious principle. By comparing our own condition with the condition of those who have preceded us, we may perceive that it has already effected not a little. But more than we can calculate remains to be done ; and there is much, which, through the blessing of God, we may hope will hereafter be accomplished. We seem indeed to be gathering but the first unripe fruits, and enjoying but a little foretaste of the rich abundance which is promised. There have been times of ignorance and infamous imposture, of violence and triumphant iniquity, when it was no small praise for those who were contending in the cause of human improvement, that they had not despaired of mankind ; *quod non desperassent de rebus humanis*. They, like the Trojan hero, have asked for no omen, but that one best omen,—Εις οιωνος αριστος,—the cause in which they were engaged. But we are living in a different state of things. There are, without doubt, those, to whom all extended regard for the happiness and improvement of their fellow-men, seems an idle and visionary thing. It is lamentable that it should be so ; and it is a lamentable mistake, if any one, feeling this indifference, supposes, at the same time, that he has the spirit of that religion whose founder " came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." But there is a living spring of virtue and happiness, whose waters have as yet been not a little choked up, and its channels not a little obstructed. There is a purifying and animating principle, whose influences have as yet been very partially felt. It is true, rational, practical religion. Has this no tendency, and no power, to produce those effects, which every good and every wise man must desire so ardently ? Even if experience had not long ago answered the question, still there could be no doubt what answer must be given. But we are every day witnessing its effects upon the characters of those around us. Some men, it is true, in their zeal for supporting a system, or in their unwillingness to acknowledge the existence of virtues which they do not possess, have uttered calumnies against our nature, and against God who gave us our nature. But he must have suffered through some singular misfortune, or some singular fault, who has advanced far in life, without witnessing and experiencing much disinterested kindness, much public spirit, much generous exertion, much moral purity, and much conscientious integrity. Imperfect as the best of men may be, there are in every rank of life those, to whom,

if all were like, the world would present a wonderfully different aspect from what it does at present. How have the characters of such men been formed? How is it that those whom we can most trust, esteem and love, have become what they are? The general answer is, that their characters have been formed under the influence of religious principle, by the continual action of those great practical truths which religion enforces. They may be of different sects; they may profess different creeds; they may even fancy that they are wide asunder from each other; but they are not. Their *practical* religion is the same. There is but one kind of practical religion in the world. It consists of those great, all-important truths, which wise and good men hold in common. It is to these truths, that we wish to give their full unimpeded efficacy. It is these truths, which we wish to bring into action, unembarrassed and unopposed by the errors that have been connected with them. It is for these truths, which have been the master principles in forming the characters of the most excellent of men, that we wish to procure more general reception; and it is for these truths, that we would vindicate their peculiar and preeminent authority. All our hopes for the welfare of man are identified with our hopes for the prevalence of true religion. And this is opposed, and has been opposed but too effectually, by those false doctrines; for which so many are yet earnestly contending. They are among the chief causes, counteracting that one great cause, to which we must look almost alone for the effective production of good. The rational and enlightened Christian, when he finds men zealously and pertinaciously defending errors, which grossly misrepresent our religion, and expose it to disbelief and contempt, will be ready to use language, like that which Tertullian addressed to the heretics of his time, *Parce spei unicæ mundi*—'Spare the only hope of mankind.'

In our endeavors to promote the influence of rational religion, what are the obstacles which present themselves? They are, in the first place, prescriptive errors and traditionary prejudices. But these are every day losing their strength. There are others indeed beside these. There are those principles in man, those selfish and vile passions, by which every effort of the moralist and philosopher, no matter from what direction it may proceed, is equally opposed. They present, therefore, no peculiar discouragement in the present case. Are the truths for which we contend, intrinsically difficult to be understood? The answer has been given by an apostle: *The doctrine is nigh unto thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the doctrine of faith which we are preaching.* The answer has been given by a prophet: *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord*

require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The prospect which true religion opens to the mind, displays a beautiful and solemn grandeur, to which that of the visible heavens forms but a faint comparison; but it is with one as with the other; we need not travel far, nor search for our point of view, in order to behold all that is given us to see of the moral or of the physical universe. Is it impossible to render the practical operation of these truths, more general and effective? Is it impossible, when religion joins her voice, to that which experience has been so long uttering, to make men believe and feel, at last, that their duty and their interest are the same; that the laws of God are but directions which he has given us in his infinite wisdom and mercy, for attaining our highest happiness; that it is better to be just and benevolent, honored and beloved, than to be selfish, unjust, and cruel, despised, distrusted, and hated; that it is unwise to sacrifice a great future good to a present indulgence, which leaves behind it dissatisfaction and repentance; and that he who submits the moral part of his nature to the animal, is degrading himself, and destroying his best capacities for enjoyment? Is it impossible that the generality of men in a Christian land should be brought to act, as if they really believed these truths, and truths such as these? Whether it be so or not, yet remains to be determined. The experiment has never been made. These principles have, indeed, governed the lives of many. They are familiar to the moralist, the philosopher, and the well educated man. The whole revelation of Jesus Christ was intended to inforce these truths. But they have not been inforced, nor have they been taught in the popular systems of religion. These systems have made a wide separation between real virtue, and what they have taught men to consider as the characteristics of a Christian. Do you believe that the religion of Spain or Italy, has had an effect to elevate and purify the morals and the minds of the inhabitants of those countries, at all corresponding to the effect which true Christianity would have produced? Do you receive our faith in its purity; and can you believe that the doctrines of Calvin have had much tendency to develope the higher powers and better affections of man? Do you believe that they have flourished under such culture; and that those doctrines have really operated very efficaciously in producing reverence, love, and gratitude toward Him, who has formed us under his curse; and active and warm-hearted benevolence toward the thoroughly depraved, and inexpressibly odious beings, our fellow men? The tendency of every prevalent system of false religion, has been to call away the attention of men from the practice of moral goodness, and to direct it to some other object. All such

systems have presented some substitute for what true religion requires. They have misapplied the sanctions of Christianity, diverting them from their great purpose. They have provided some hiding place and shelter for the baser passions; and these, in return, have often been most zealous in their defence. This is the great characteristic distinction between true religion and false; that the former directs all its motives and sanctions to the production of real moral excellence; and that the latter sets up something else as the object of its requisitions and promises. The belief of a creed, the belonging to a particular sect, zeal for the church, zeal for orthodoxy, even a readiness to engage in the work of persecution, the self infliction of bodily torture, the practice of useless austerities, the endurance of useless privations, absolutions purchased with money from a miserable fellow-sinner, reliance upon substituted merit, a fancied miraculous change of character, the being elected to salvation by an arbitrary and irreversible decree, these, and other similar distinctions, and means, have all been sanctioned, or countenanced, by different modes of false religion among Christians, as pledges of the favor of God, and passports to eternal happiness. Amid the triumph of these different errors, true moral excellence, the one, and the only thing needful, has been regarded with about as much favor, as a deposed monarch might expect from usurpers, who had seized upon, and divided his kingdom. Make yourself acquainted with the true characters of many of those, with whom one or another system of false religion, has peopled heaven, and consider whether it be desirable that the number of such men should be multiplied upon earth? Are we to expect any thing very much resembling the influence of true religion, from systems, which hold up so false a standard of moral excellence? If we are not, the experiment is yet to be made, which shall determine what that influence may be.

It is the indissoluble union between the religious opinions of men and their moral characters, which renders the former, a subject of so much importance and interest. The controversies which exist respecting religious doctrines, are not, as some seem to believe, mere disputes among theologians, about speculative opinions and scholastic subtilties; they are a contest between truth and error, upon subjects of a practical importance that cannot be estimated. They concern opinions, which lie at the very foundation of our hopes, our principles, our affections, our whole characters; and which, as they are true or false, useful or pernicious, communicate their complexion and features to the whole aspect of society. They are controversies between truth and error, respecting essential doctrines in the highest de-

partment of human knowledge. The present state of things is the result of the march of intellectual improvement, which advancing rapidly elsewhere, has been stopped, and thrown back, and broken, by the prejudices that have entrenched themselves on religious ground. No one interested in the well-being of his fellow men, is privileged to stand aloof, and look on with indifference. There is a moral obligation upon every man, similar to that law which bound the citizens of Athens in their civil divisions, to take part with one side or the other. Those theologians who are engaged in defending the truth, are engaged in maintaining the great cause of intellectual improvement, of good morals, of civil and religious freedom, of rational piety, of human happiness,—of mankind. They have a right to expect the aid of all who are interested in the same objects. They have a right to expect, that those who are employed in other intellectual pursuits, and other efforts to benefit their fellow men, will not so separate and disconnect themselves, as they have sometimes done, through misapprehension of the importance of the controversy, and through disgust at the style of reasoning, and modes of attack which they must have to encounter. Are you interested in advancing human knowledge, and can you think it a matter of indifference, whether men hold the grossest errors or the sublimest truths, concerning the very highest objects of speculation? You can hardly help feeling some degree of indignation and contempt, toward those who condemned Galileo to the prisons of the Inquisition, for teaching the motion of the earth; or toward the men, who calumniated and persecuted Harvey, because he made known the circulation of the blood. You respect the good sense and courage of those, by whom these truths were first maintained, in opposition to surrounding ignorance and prejudice. But nobody will think it too much to say, that these truths are not to be compared in importance, with those which relate to the nature, character, and moral government of God; and to the condition, duty, and destination of man. You are desirous of diffusing the blessings of instruction through the community, of carrying knowledge and light to the poor man's dwelling. Is there any knowledge which will be of such value to him as the knowledge of his duty and his hopes; as that knowledge which will make him a good citizen, which will reconcile him to his situation, and which may, at the same time, raise him to an essential equality with the most favoured of mankind? You are interested, generally, in the well-being of your fellow-men; you are ready to afford your aid to those who would lessen the amount of abuses and evils, of crimes and miseries, which prey upon society; you admire the intense energy of mo-

ral feeling which carried Howard, as a minister of good, wherever human wretchedness was to be found ; you know how to estimate the patient, untired, unyielding efforts of those who have almost succeeded in relieving the civilized world from the curse and the infamy of the slave-trade ; you at least give your good wishes to those who would save mankind from the guilt and the horrors of war ; you are interested in every plan of enlightened benevolence ;—is it possible then, that you can be uninterested in asserting the character of those truths, and giving efficacy to those principles, which are the support and strength of all the social virtues ; and without the belief of which, true, self-denying, persevering benevolence would find no dwelling place upon earth ? The belief of these truths has formed the characters of that class of men in society, on whom the good order and happiness of the community depends, and from whom alone you can look for safe auxiliaries, in all endeavors to reform the evils which are in the world, and improve the human condition. This belief alone can give birth to that disinterested love of virtue, and of mankind, which pursues its object through good report, and through evil report, through opposition and danger and suffering ; and has pursued it even into the arms of death. It is this belief which creates the well disposed citizen, the real patriot, and the enlightened and practical philosopher. If you doubt the value and efficacy of true religion, look to experience, and look to human nature. If you do not doubt it, can you fail to give your aid to those who would vindicate its character and extend its influence ?

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR—No. 4.

We endeavoured to show in our last number, that there is no plausible pretence of scriptural evidence for the existence of any being distinct from God the Father, called the Holy Spirit. Unless however, the existence of such a being is proved, the doctrine of the trinity cannot be maintained, the former doctrine being an essential part of the latter. We might, therefore, as far as the belief in a trinity of persons is concerned, safely rest the discussion here, since in order to disprove the assumption that there are three equal persons, all that is necessary is to disprove the existence of one of the three. We will proceed however, at the risk of being thought to be engaged in a gratuitous labour, to the examination of certain texts which are supposed to prove that our Saviour is God ; and in the first place, of some in which the *name* God is understood to be applied to him.

An important remark is to be premised. It is, that supposing the *title* God to be given in scripture any number of times to our Saviour, this of itself would go very little way towards proving his Supreme Deity.—Why? Because this title is often given in scripture to beings allowed on all sides to be derived and dependent. As we should not be able to state the proof of this ourselves to equal advantage, we give it in an extract from Yates' answer to Wardlaw. "GOD" is not a Name, which belongs exclusively to the Supreme Being. The title is applied in the Sacred Scriptures, not to him alone, but to some of his creatures. In proof of this fact the Unitarians appeal to no less an authority than that of Jesus Christ himself, who affirms, that in the Scriptures, *those persons are called* GODS, *unto whom the word of God came.* John x. 35. If his testimony require, or admit of, any confirmation, it is afforded by the following passages; Gen. iii. 5. "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as GODS, knowing good and evil." Ex. vii. 1. "And the LORD said unto Moses, 'See, I have made thee a GOD to Pharaoh.'" xv. 11. "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the GODS." xxi. 6. "Then his master shall bring him unto the *Judges*," literally, "unto the GODS." xxii. 8, 9. "If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the *Judges*, (literally, unto the GODS,) to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods: For all manner of trespasses, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the *Judges;* (literally, before the GODS) and whom the *Judges* (literally, the GODS) shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour." Ver. 28. "Thou shall not revile the GODS, nor curse the *ruler* of thy people." Deut. x. 17. "For the LORD, your God, is God of GODS." 1 Samuel ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the *Judge* (literally, the GOD) shall judge him." xxviii. 13. "I saw *Gods* (properly, a GOD) ascending out of the earth." Ps. viii. 5. "For thou hast made him a little lower *than the Angels*," literally, "than the GODS." lxxxii. 1. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the GODS." Ver. 6. "I have said, 'Ye are GODS.'" lxxxvi. 8. "Among the GODS there is none like unto thee, O LORD." xcvii. 7. "Worship him, all ye GODS." Ver. 9. "Thou, LORD, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all GODS." Here are seventeen cases, (and I think it probable, that there are more) of the use of the word GOD in the sense, affixed to it by our Saviour. It is therefore undeniable, that the name may be given, according to the practice of the Sacred Writings, to all persons, whether Angels, Prophets, or Judges, *to whom the word of*

God comes, or, *who are authorized, commissioned, and inspired to declare the will of God to mankind. In this sense* all Unitarians admit and maintain, that Jesus Christ was A GOD. The mere application to him of this title consequently proves nothing. As a learned Unitarian author observes, "The question is not, whether Christ is called GOD in Scripture, for that is undeniable; but, *in what sense* the word is to be understood." (H. Taylor's Considerations on Ancient and Modern Creeds compared, p. 124.) The established principles of criticism require, that we should prefer that interpretation, which is agreeable to the clear and universally acknowledged doctrine of the Scriptures, before that, which is contrary to any known truth, or which is attended with any considerable difficulties. Since therefore it is a fact, about which there is among Christians no dispute, that Jesus was a person, "unto whom the word of God came;" since we know, that he vindicated the application to himself of the title GOD, taken in *this* sense (John x. 34, 35.) and since we do not know, until it be proved, that the title belongs to him in any *other* sense; we ought thus to understand it, wherever we find it applied to him in the Sacred Scriptures, *unless there be some particular circumstances in the mode of applicat on*, which point him out as THE SUPREME GOD, THE ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, THE GOD OF GODS, or THE GOD WHO IS ABOVE ALL."

The name God being given then to prophets, rulers, judges, and angels, it will be seen how little distance, considering the use of the scripture writers. it would go, toward proving the supreme deity of our Saviour, even were it often given him in scripture. It will appear from the remarks we shall next offer, how far this is to be allowed.

RELIGIOUS BOOKS.

A FRIEND expresses in a note the satisfaction and improvement which have been derived from the following books; and adds the remarks subjoined.

Nelson's Practice of True Devotion. Fellows' Picture of Christian Philosophy. Porteus' Lectures on the Gospel of St. Matthew. Letters of Henry Kirk White. Mason on Self Knowledge. Hannah More's Practical Education. Scougal's Life of God in the Soul of Man. Merivale's Daily Devotions. Fellows' Guide to Immortality. Harwood's Introduction to the Study of the New Testament.

" Hannah More's Sacred Dramas are very useful to young persons, as they familiarize them with interesting portions of scripture history, and Ganganelli's Letters are excellent for those in more mature life. It is true that the former is a strict Trinitarian, and what would be more shocking to many, the latter was a Roman catholic. But I am of Mrs. Barbauld's opinion, who says " we may see much good in a doctrine to which we cannot give our assent; we may respect tendencies of a sect, the tenets of which we utterly disapprove."

ON PROVISION BY LAW FOR THE SUPPORT OF CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS.

The approaching Convention for the revision of the Constitution of Massachusetts, is an object of interest in no point of view more, than as regards the effect it may have on the religious institutions of the state. Our present Constitution makes provision, on the most large and liberal basis, for the support of Christian worship and teaching amongst the people; wisely considering, that the general safety and happiness could be in no way more certainly secured, than by insuring familiar acquaintance with religious truths. Under this system, the past and present generations have happily and virtuously lived, and various denominations of christians have flourished and increased. With this system however, many, for various reasons, are much dissatisfied, and efforts will be made, perhaps successfully, to expunge the present article on this subject from the Declaration of Rights. We cannot but feel that such an event would be unhappy, and injurious to the general cause of religion and of the state. We cannot enter at large into the subject, or attempt to state fully the grounds on which this opinion may be defended. But we beg the very serious attention of our readers to a few paragraphs, while we express our earnest hope, that our fellow citizens and fellow christians will not suffer themselves to be led, by the vague cry of toleration, liberality, and rights of conscience, or the still more vague dread of an unhallowed alliance between church and state, inconsiderately to abandon the provisions of our forefathers, under which we have so long prospered.

There is danger that the nature of the constitutional provisions may not be understood. There is nothing in them like an established church, or a form of natural faith and worship. All sects and opinions of protestant christians are alike protected. There is no alliance of church and state; no combination of an eccle-

siastical with a lay aristocracy for mutual support and defence. The church is as republican as the government itself. The people choose their own ministers, and they will be of such denomination as the majority of parishioners approve. There is no controul over the conscience; no proselyting spirit. The right of every individual to maintain his own opinions, and to worship his Creator in such form as his judgment may dictate, is secured. Let the article in question be examined, and it is impossible to find in it any thing, but a recognition of the great principle, that to the happiness and good order of every community, religion is most essential. The very fact, that the protection of the law is extended alike to all the sects, into which protestant christians are divided, gives the assurance that the power vested in the legislature, can never be abused for the purposes of political oppression. And what is this power? Simply to make provision for the support of public religious instruction by such teachers, as the majority may prefer. And is this an object, which any government, having in view the safety and happiness of the people, can properly neglect? But it may be said, the very nature of religion forbids the interference of the civil arm. Our Saviour said, "my kingdom is not of this world"—and his disciples violate the spirit of his religion, if they attempt to promote it by the aid of temporal power. Let it be remembered, that the Constitution confines itself to providing, that there shall be instruction in the principles of religion and morality; it compels no one to hear doctrines, or to join in a mode of worship, which his conscience condemns; it assumes no authority over the belief; it selects no creed as the orthodox faith. It trusts the cause of religion to the fair influence of reason and truth over the mind, without presuming to enforce their instructions by any legal enactments. What it requires, is only, that throughout the Commonwealth, there be schools for teaching those great and all-important truths, which can never cease to be taught without involving the downfal of good order, and good government; without even the corruption and overthrow of our free institutions, and the destruction of the spirit of liberty. What, we would ask, but the christian religion, has given rise to the liberal and enlightened views of the mutual rights and relations of men, now prevailing in the greater part of the civilized world? What else has gradually elevated the serf and bondsman till his claims as a man are acknowledged, and the class of slaves has disappeared from most of the nations of Europe? To what, but to the extension of Christian principles, which teach us to regard all men as brothers, and equal in the sight of God, can we ascribe the influence and power, which the middling and commercial classes

have acquired in all the governments, which originally were founded on the principles of feudal aristocracy ? And when Christian instruction shall cease to be regarded as the most important good, which a government can provide for its people, what can we expect, but the decline of good morals, and the consequent return of ignorance and despotism ?

It may be thought by some, that there is security enough in the attachment of the people to religion, and that we may rely on a voluntary provision. But those who reason thus, forget that this very attachment is the fruit of that legal provision for public instruction in religion, which from ancient times has existed among us.* They forget, that it is because from their earliest years they have heard the lessons of piety inculcated from the pulpit, that the great mass of our population are decent in their observance of the Sabbath, and revere the institutions of Christianity. Let the legal support be removed, let it be once solemnly declared, that the people of Massachusetts no longer consider the Christian Religion, as the basis and support of their government, and who will undertake to foretell the consequences ? But it is enough to say, that the power of compelling is only given, "in all cases, where such provision shall not be made voluntarily." If then the attachment to religious institutions be so strong, that provision would continue to be voluntarily made, through this article were expunged from the Bill of Rights, its continuance can assuredly do no harm; while to expunge it may be followed by the most alarming evils.

We would add a few words on the importance of conforming, so far as the present Constitution goes, the *government* of the country to the *religion* of the country. We profess to be Christians. We profess to receive the light of revelation as the greatest possible favor of the Deity. We profess to consider ourselves bound to carry its injunctions into all the duties of life. We hope to form our characters by it here, and to bear the stamp of that character forever. We profess to believe that Christianity should infuse its influence, its graces, and its authority into the actions of our lives, open and private, public and domestic. Further, we profess to believe it to be our individual duty to recommend Christianity by our example ; to extend its influence and authority ; to recommend it by shewing our sense of its importance, and to diffuse the knowledge of it over the whole world, as far and as fast as we are able, for the enlightening of the nations, and the salvation of men. Now, if we in truth feel the pressure of these high and solemn duties upon us as in-

* See the Act of 1692—(Col. and Prov. Laws, p. 243,) which provides at once for the support of ministers and schoolmasters.

dividuals, how do we escape from their weight, in our social capacity, as members of the state? Is it not equally imperative upon us to endeavour for the infusion of the spirit of Christianity into the rule and conduct of our society? Is it more important, what the opinions, or what the example of individuals may be, than what the opinions and examples of the whole, as represented in the corporate society may be? Has government no duties to perform, which require a christian spirit, or a christian character? Has it no examples to set, which may do good or evil?—And while we are exerting ourselves, in common with other christian nations, to carry the blessings of the christian character over the world, should we signalize ourselves for consistency, and leave no room to question the sincerity of our professions, if we should declare, in the fundamental articles of our social compact, that we hold it to be not at all indispensable, that this Christianity should be the religion of our government; and that we hold ourselves excused even from giving it a decent preference over infidelity and atheism?

In this view, it must be regarded as matter of high importance, that we, as a Christian people, should insist upon having none but Christian rulers. And we cannot see that this defrauds any one of his *rights*. Strictly speaking, there can be no *right* to be elected into an office. Election to office, goes upon the opinion of the electors of the trustworthiness of the elected. It is altogether matter of trust, and confidence, and good opinion; and no man can claim, as matter of legal right, the confidence and good opinion of his neighbors. If then the electors may choose whom they please, and may do this on the score of such qualifications as they please to require, they may, if they see fit, make such qualifications general requisites, and may prescribe them before hand, as essential to the subject of their choice. If two candidates were this day before the people, for the chief magistracy of the commonwealth, the one a christian, and the other an infidel, they would have an unquestionable right to elect the former, *because* he was a christian, and to reject the latter *because* he was an infidel. And they have the same right to say before hand, and to make it a part of their constitution, that they will confine their choice of chief magistrate to such persons as are christians. There is no difference in the cases. If they can rightfully give this preference, in one case, they can as rightfully establish it as the rule for all cases. There is no injustice certainly in this. The only consideration is, whether it be expedient, upon the whole. And this depends upon the opinion which we form of the *importance* of the qualification. If the ground of distinction be frivolous, or entitled to little regard, it would be most unwise, in establishing a frame of government, to insist on

the distinction. But if, on the other hand, it be deemed highly important to the public interest, that a certain qualification should be possessed by all public men, then, clearly, it ought to be required. Is there, then, any thing which renders it *important*, that men, discharging public functions, in a Christian country, should be Christians? A question, we think, which we need not answer by an argument:—And yet to this question, does the whole discussion come at last. Some might answer, "yes, certainly; it is most important that the public men in a Christian country should be Christians; but as such would, always, or ordinarily be chosen, without any constitutional requirement, it is not important, that there should be such requirement. But this answer yields the right, without disproving the expediency of the measure. For if it be important that a given course of things should take place, it is always expedient to ensure that course of things, if it can be done with justice and convenience. The Constitution, as it at present stands, only gives a security for that, which almost every one, we presume, deems to be of itself desirable. It does this, without taking away any man's right, or affecting any man's conscience.

We must beg leave to add, that Christianity, whatever abuses have flowed from its corruptions, in its true state, is a religion of liberty. Toleration is a part of Christianity, even the toleration of its deadliest enemies. This is more than can be said of any other religion. The ancient pagans knew nothing of the practice of toleration—the modern pagans know as little. In giving to the state, therefore, the religion of Christianity, we not only give it a religion which we believe to be divine, and upon which, as individuals, we trust our own highest interest, but we give also a religion of toleration and charity.

But it is moreover, and especially to be remembered, that we are not now, for the first time, called on to insert this principle into the Constitution. We find it there. Men, whose love of liberty would suffer in no comparison with that of any in our days, have placed and left it there. It cannot, we think, be truly said, that any individual has suffered wrong from it. Nor have we the least question but that the great body politic has derived good from it. To strike out and expunge it now, would seem to us to be a sort of gratuitous disrespect to the Christian religion. It would seem to be going out of our way to manifest an indifference to religious character; a causeless, pains-taking effort to express our opinion, that the greatest concerns of civil life—all that government has any influence over, directly or indirectly—political freedom—personal security—property—character—education—morality, and even religion itself, are as well protected without as with, either the influence or the sanctions of Christianity.

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

RELIGION IN SPAIN.

The readers of the Disciple will probably be interested by the following extracts from Jacob's travels, respecting the state of religion in Spain.

"The subject of Religion is too important in this country to be slightly passed over. Its ceremonies, indeed, so frequently recur, expressions derived from it are so commonly used, and the habits of the people are so formed by it, that it merits the greatest attention. The feelings of religion are supported by every object that presents itself to the view: at the corners of most of the principal streets, the shrines of various saints obtrude themselves upon the passenger; even the fronts of many of the houses are adorned with their images, to which the pious stranger uncovers his head with humility, and silently expresses his devotion by making the sign of the cross.

"In the midst of the gaieties which commence about five o'clock in the evening, when the Paseo, or public walk, is crowded with company dressed in their most splendid attire, and indulging in the liveliest conversation, the sound of a bell announces the approaching hour of sunset. At this signal, which is called oracion, every one, as if by magic, seems fixed in his place; every head is uncovered, and the whole company repeats, or is supposed to repeat, a mental prayer: after a few minutes devoted to these formalities, the lively scene is resumed, and the conversation continued from the point at which it met this pious interruption. This ceremony takes place in every part of Spain; and where theatres or other public amusements are open, the sound of this bell suspends the entertainment till the prayer is over; so great is its effect, that it is even said that assassins, at the moment of executing their horrid design, have held their hand at the sound of the oracion, and, after repeating the habitual prayer, have perpetrated their diabolical purpose.

"I have reason to suspect that this practice, as well as some others, arises more from conformity to the usages of their country, than from any strong religious feelings, for I have observed in private houses, that the attention paid to this bell diminishes in proportion to the rank of the family: among the lower classes of people it is usual to kneel or stand up; among those of greater consequence they merely sit still and remain silent;

while those of the highest rank suffer the bell to toll unheard and unregarded.

"No one of the various religious observances, with which this city abounds, appears more ludicrous to me, or more solemn to the inhabitants, than the procession of the host to the houses of the sick, at the hour of approaching dissolution. A priest, seated in a sedan chair, with the holy elements in a gold case on his lap, escorted by a guard of soldiers, and preceded by a bellman, is literally denominated by the people 'His Majesty coming down the street.' To increase the singularity of the spectacle, the bellman strikes three strokes, in allusion to the three persons of the Trinity, and then ceases. At this well known sound, whatever be the state of the weather, or the condition of the streets, every one drops on his knees, and continues in this devout posture till the object of adoration is out of sight. If this procession should pass through a street, containing a theatre or a ball-room, the actors on the stage, and the dancers at the assembly, alike drop on their knees till the sound is lost, when they resume their thoughtless dissipation.

"There are nightly processions through the streets of this city, called the Rosario, one of which I mentioned having met, in a former letter, as I entered this place. The different wards conduct this procession by turns, so that it is every night parading in some part of the town; being more or less splendid, according to the revenues of the church or convent whence it proceeds. The Rosario is complimented by the inhabitants of the streets through which it passes, by illuminations, that have a splendid effect, but which is in a great measure counteracted by the horrid noise of the singers and chanters.

"The common forms of salutation, perhaps, partake no more of religion than those of other countries; and 'va ja usted con Dios,' is only equivalent to the French 'adieu,' or the English 'good bye;' but a mode of expression is adopted, much more striking and singular, on visiting any family; when you ring or knock, a servant within inquires, 'who calls?' and the person who wishes for admission exclaims, 'Ave Maria purissima,' to which those within, on opening the door, make response, 'Sin pecado concebida;' and as the first of these sentences cannot be uttered by the Devil, and the second will not be said by a heretic, there is no danger in the visit, when such orthodox formalities have been mutually exchanged. When our party has been introduced into a family, I have frequently heard the inquiry, made in a whisper, 'Are they Christians?' if the persons who introduced us, replied 'they are Protestants,' a sigh, with the exclamation 'que lastima' (what a pity), frequently escaped their lips.

"However decorous the Spaniards may be in the performance of their public devotions, nothing can be more indecent and slovenly than the manner in which their domestic worship is conducted; a circumstance which I have frequently noticed in the family with whom I lodge. Towards the conclusion of supper, when seated round the table, the master of the house commences with repeating ten Ave Maria's; the wife repeats the Pater Noster and her ten Ave Maria's, others at table repeat in the same manner, while one of them with a rosary of beads keeps the account, till they have repeated the Ave Maria fifty times, and the Lord's prayer five times, the number being accurately corrected by the string of beads. They then say a litany, adding to the name of every saint of a long list, 'ora pro nobis;' then a prayer for the dead, another for protection during the night, and conclude the whole with a Gloria Patri. The words are uttered with as much rapidity as possible; and if any employment calls away the person who is repeating, he performs the work without interrupting the prayer, or losing any time; in fact, the Spaniards appear to act slowly and deliberately in every thing they undertake, except it be in this single instance of family worship.

"Under every strong emotion of mind, a Spaniard has recourse to religion, and naturally crosses himself, to calm the rage of passion, dispel the horrors of fear, and allay the feelings of surprise and astonishment. The solitude of a church-yard, the loneliness of a desart, and the darkness of night, are disarmed of their terrors by this magic sign, and even the exclamations of wonder, excited by English ships of war and English regiments (and nothing has excited more wonder) can only be silenced by using this never-failing and powerful charm.

"With all this attachment to forms and ceremonies, it might naturally be expected, that the clergy would be looked upon as objects of veneration; but, so far as I can judge, this is by no means the case. The language held towards the ministers of religion is not always respectful, and is sometimes scurrilous. A few days ago, the auxiliary bishop of this city made a tour round his diocese, for the purpose of confirmation; from every person confirmed, a small sum of money was required, which was either an increase of the customary fee, or a novel demand. On his return to the city with the money, he had thus collected, he was attacked by a banditti, who robbed him, not only of his extorted wealth, but also of all the clothes and vestments which he carried in his coach. The knowledge of the story excited the jokes and the merriment of the people, mixed with wishes that the clergy were the only victims of robbers. The character

and conduct of the friars is generally the object either of virulent reprobation, or ludicrous jocularity. They have lost the esteem of every one, and instead of being respected for their seclusion from the world, they are reproached by all classes for their indolence, their voluptuousness, and their profligacy; their dispersion is generally looked forward to with pleasing anticipation, as an event that must take place, if ever the people of Spain are assembled by their representatives the Cortes."

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"On Sunday I went to the Cathedral, to see the ceremony of high Mass. There is a pomp and splendour in the Catholic worship, when performed in a country where that religion is established, which, like any other pageant, dazzles for a moment, and confines the attention to the imposing spectacle; but it is so different from any of our feelings of religion, that the impression it makes upon us, differs little from that which the best scenes in a theatre produce. On those, however, who from early and repeated association have connected these ceremonies with religious ideas, and with the strong feelings of adoration and gratitude, the effect produced must be very great, though I should suspect very transient.

"I have frequently visited this Church before, and every time with such increased admiration, that I am afraid to attempt a description of it, from a consciousness of the difficulty to do justice to my own impressions. From the climate, it is necessary to exclude the heat, and of course the light; there are consequently but few windows, and those of painted glass, barely sufficient to give light enough to distinguish, on first entering, the various surrounding objects. This produces a solemn effect on the high altar, which is brilliantly illuminated with wax-tapers of an enormous size. The decorations of this altar are splendid and sumptuous beyond description; the quantity of gilding on the borders of the different compartments, filled with images and pictures, the massy silver and gold ornaments, and the rails of bronze, tastefully designed, compose a most impressive whole. The priests kneeling before the altar, and in silence offering up their devotions, the clouds of ascending incense, and the pious on their knees, in the most striking attitudes, altogether form a scene that at once captivates the imagination, and suspends the reasoning faculties; it is a scene to be felt but not described; the sensations it produces may be indulged, but cannot long delude a reflecting mind.

"My English ideas were not to be seduced by this imposing spectacle, and I could not refrain, after a few minutes, from calculating what portion of all that is valuable in man, of moral

rectitude, of benevolent propensity, and of patience in adversity, is produced by all this costly machinery. That some part of this machinery may be useful it would be unjust to doubt, and rash must that man be, who would hastily and inconsiderately level to the ground even these supports, feeble as they are, of the virtue and consolation of a whole people. The great distinction between the English Clergy and those of the Catholic Church, as well as some of our English sectaries, is, that the former, in all their public services, strive chiefly to enforce practical virtue, while the latter lay the greatest stress on the adherence to their peculiar rites and doctrines.

"Religion in every country is calculated to produce an effect on manners as well as on morals; in England, among those who read but little or not at all, the effect is accomplished by public preaching; but in Spain, where preaching is by no means common, the knowledge of Religion is kept alive by sensible representations of the events of the Gospel history. These are exhibited in the Churches, or the Calvarios, on the days set apart for celebrating the leading facts of the Christian Religion, or on days consecrated to the memory of particular Saints. From these the people collect with tolerable accuracy the true accounts of the life and miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles; but they receive with equal credit legends of Saints, which from the manner in which they are taught, they cannot distinguish from authentic facts; but virtue, which ought to form the ultimate object of all true Religion, which elevates man to the highest rank of which he is susceptible, and assimilates him to a superior order of beings, is left to the confessor to be impressed on the mind of the penitent.

"Auricular confession is but a poor substitute for public preaching; or rather, public teaching, which the Reformation introduced, is an excellent substitute for auricular confession. The dignity of the pulpit makes reproof more severe, denunciations more alarming, advice more powerful, and consolation more soothing; while the intimacy, and sometimes the familiarity of auricular confession, makes the penitent feel but too forcibly that the spiritual guide has all the passions and weakness of those who rely on him.

"I should, however, be sorry to see this practice abolished till some better were introduced in its stead; for though it be obvious that the profligacy of the higher classes is not corrected by their Religion, and whatever dominion they may allow their priests over their faith and their rituals, they allow them very little over their morals, yet, with the middle and lower ranks of society, who form the most virtuous and moral class of the peo-

ple, they have a beneficial influence. With the higher order, the great struggle of the confessor is to keep the mind free from doubts, to enforce submission to the dogmas and ceremonies of the Church, and prevent the inroad of heresy. With the other classes there is no such task; they never read books written by foreigners, nor ever converse with them; they have no doubts on points of faith, no scruples in matters of ceremony, and the task of the confessor is more directly addressed to the formation of the moral habits of sobriety, honesty, and veracity. On these points they have evidently been successful; for I have never been in any country where the mass of the people has approached the conduct of the Spaniards in these respects; in chastity, as far as I can judge, they have not been so successful; whether the evil arise from the celibacy of the clergy, the voluptuous climate, or the remains of Moorish manners, I cannot determine; but there is, in this respect, a degree of profligacy extending to all ranks in this country, which I trust will ever remain unexampled in our own."

While there is no reason to doubt the general correctness of the facts and opinions in the preceding extracts, there is perhaps a little inconsistency between what is said in the last paragraph, and what precedes. It may be doubted, whether the *sobriety, honesty, and veracity* of the lower classes in Spain is to be attributed much to any direct religious influence. Sobriety seems to be a common virtue of southern climates, very little the result of moral restraint in their inhabitants; but depending principally upon physical causes. The other characteristics of honesty and veracity, are, perhaps, to be traced back to the manners and feelings of that age, when chivalry was the pride of Spain; or, at least, to be referred to moral sentiments, not very dependent on the instructions of the confessor.

EXTRACTS FROM FLAVEL.

It is impossible for any burlesque or misrepresentation of religion, to have a tendency to expose it to more contempt, than the writings of some of those who have been celebrated among the champions of the true faith. This remark may be illustrated by the following quotations from a Sermon of Flavel's. It is the third in the first volume of his works, *on the covenant of redemption betwixt the Father and the Redeemer.*

"Christ having told God how ready and fit he was for his service, he will know of him what reward he shall have for his work; for he resolves his blood shall not be sold at low and

cheap rates. Hereupon (*Isaiah* xlix. 3.) the Father offers him the elect of Israel for his reward, bidding low at first (as they that make bargains use to do) and only offers him that small remnant, still intending to bid higher. But Christ will not be satisfied with these; he values his blood higher than so; therefore, in *ver.* 4, he is brought in complaining, *I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for naught:* This is but a small reward for so great a suffering as I must undergo; my blood is much more worth than this comes to, and will be sufficient to redeem all the elect dispersed among the Isles of the Gentiles. Hereupon the Father comes up higher, and tells him, he intends to reward him better than so, and therefore," &c.

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"The persons transacting and dealing together in this covenant are indeed great persons, God the Father, and God the Son, the former as a *creditor*, the latter as *surety*. The Father stands upon satisfaction, the Son engages to give it. If it be demanded why the Father and the Spirit might not as well have treated upon our redemption, as the Father and the Son? It is answered," &c. Our readers will be satisfied, we think, without the answer.

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"And forasmuch as God knew it was a hard and difficult work his Son was to undertake, a work that would have broken the backs of all the Angels in Heaven, and men on earth, had they engaged in it, therefore he promises to stand by him, and assist, and strengthen him for it. So Isaiah, xlii. 5, 6, 7."

The work of redemption it seems was so hard, that it was necessary for omnipotence to be strengthened in its accomplishment. It is afterwards said however, that both the federates in the covenant were 'infinitely able and faithful to perform their parts.'

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"They were hard and difficult terms indeed, on which Christ received the elect from the Father's hand; it was, as you have heard, to pour out his soul unto death, or not to enjoy a soul of you. Here you may suppose the Father to say, when driving this bargain with Christ for you:

Father. My son, here be a company of poor miserable souls, that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice. Justice demands satisfaction from them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. What shall be done for these souls? And thus Christ returns:

Son. O my father, such is my love to and pity for them, that rather than they should perish eternally, I will be responsible for

them as their surety. Bring in all thy bills, that I may see what they owe thee. *Lord*, bring them all in, that there may be no after reckonings with them; at my hands shalt thou require it. I will rather choose to suffer thy wrath, than they should suffer it. Upon me, my Father upon me, be all their debt.

Father. But, my Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last mite; expect no abatements; if I spare them, I will not spare thee.

Son. Content, Father, let it be so. Charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it; and though it prove a kind of undoing of me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, (for so indeed it did, 2 Cor. viii. 9. *Though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor,*) yet I am content to undertake it."

The preceding extracts are saved from being the grossest profaneness, only by being the grossest nonsense. Yet Flavel was a very popular writer in his day; and his works are recommended, as of particular value to a young clergyman, by the Professor of Sacred Eloquence at Andover, in the list of select books for a theological library, which he has published. How much his writings will tend to purify and elevate the religious sentiments of those by whom they are studied, and to raise their conceptions of God, and of our Saviour, may be inferred from the extracts that have been made. Their happy influence in leading men to the practice of virtue, may be judged of from the following passage —Sermon 14.

"It would grieve one's heart to see how many poor creatures are drudging and tugging at the task of repentance, and revenge upon themselves, and reformation, and obedience, to satisfy God for what they have done against him. And, alas, it cannot be; they do but lose their labor; could they swelter their very hearts out, weep till they can weep no more, cry till their throats be parched, alas, they can never recompense God for one vain thought. For such is the severity of the law, that, when it is once offended, it will never be made amends again by all that we can do; it will not discharge the sinner for all the sorrow in the world. Indeed if a man be in Christ, sorrow for sin is something, and renewed observance is something; God looks upon them favorably, and accepts them graciously in Christ; but out of him, they signify no more than the entreaties and cries of a condemned malefactor, to reverse the legal sentence of the judge. You may toil all the days of your life, and at night go to bed without a candle. To that sense, that scripture sounds, *Isa. l. ult. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled: This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.*

By *fire*, and the light of it, some understand the sparkling pleasures of this life, and the sensitive joys of the creatures; but generally it's taken for our own natural righteousness, and all acts of duties, in order to our justification by them before God. And so it stands opposed to that faith of recumbency, spoken of in the verse before. By their *compassing themselves about with these sparks*, understand their dependance on those their duties, and glorying in them. But see the fatal issue, *Ye shall lie down in sorrow.* That shall be your recompense from the hand of the Lord; that is all the thanks and reward you must expect from him, for slighting Christ's, and preferring your own righteousness before his. Reader, be convinced, that one act of faith in the Lord Jesus, pleases God more than all the obedience, repentance and strivings to obey the law, throughout thy whole life can do."

It has always been the grand object of false religion, to find out something, which would please God better than obedience.

EXTRACT FROM MITFORD'S HISTORY OF GREECE.

After what has just been quoted, it will be comfortable to hear again the voice of reason. The following passage is from the most judicious, the most acute, and the most philosophical of historians. We do not, however, agree with him in believing that the prevalence at one time of superstition, and at another of scepticism, is an *inevitable* consequence of the nature of man. But the greater are the tendencies to these evils, the more strongly are we called upon to exert ourselves in resisting these tendencies.

"In all countries," says Mitford, "and through all ages, Religion and civil government have been so connected, that no history can be given of either without reference to the other. But in the accounts remaining of the earliest times, the attention every where paid to religion, the deep interest taken in it, by individuals and by communities, by people polished equally and unpolished, is peculiarly striking. A sense of dependency on some superior Being, seems indeed inseparable from man; it is in a manner instinct in him. His own helplessness, compared with the stupendous powers of nature, which he sees constantly exerted around him, makes the savage ever anxiously look for some being of a higher order, on whom to rely: and the man educated to exercise the faculties of his mind, has only to reflect on himself, on his own abilities, his own weakness, his own know-

ledge, his own ignorance, his own happiness, his own misery, his own beginning, and his end, to be directed not only to belief in some superior Being, but also to expectation of some future state, through mere conviction that nature, hath given him both a great deal more, and a great deal less, than were necessary to fit him for this alone. Religion, therefore, can never be lost among mankind ; but, through the imperfection of our nature, it is so prone to degenerate, that superstition in one state of society, and scepticism in another, may, perhaps not improperly be called nature's works The variety, indeed, and the grossness of the corruptions of religion, from which few pages in the annals of the world are pure, may well on first view excite our wonder. But, if we proceed to inquire after their origin, we find immediately, such sources in the nature and condition of man, that evidently nothing under a constant miracle, could prevent those effects to which the history of all countries, in all ages bears testimony. The fears of ignorance, the interest of cunning, the pride of science, have been the mainsprings : every human passion has contributed its addition."

REVIEW.

ARTICLE XI.

Sermons on Various Subjects. By Henry Colman. Boston, published by J. W. Burditt. T. B. Wait, printer. 1820. pp. 367.

A volume of Sermons from a living author is a rare gift to the Christian public, which ought not to pass unnoticed. A very large proportion of the original works, published in our country, are upon theological subjects, and single sermons and short treatises are abundant. But few have been found bold enough or industrious enough to send from the press a volume of discourses, which having been written hastily, for the ordinary instruction of their people, could only with the greatest labor be prepared for the eye of the reader. Most of those volumes, therefore, which are to show the theological and literary character of our ministers, have come forth under all the disadvantages of posthumous publication ; and although we have no reason to be mortified on their account, especially since amongst them are the sermons of Buckminster, undoubtedly some of the best which the world has produced ; yet we are compelled to make constant allowances, as we read them, and are left to conjecture what they might have been if they could have been completed by their authors. We

are glad to meet with an exception in the volume before us, which will be found in no respect discreditable to the religious or literary character of our community, and which we hope will meet a circulation equal to its merits.

The sermons are twenty three in number, all upon important subjects, and for the most part of a practical character. In this respect they are a fair representation of the general preaching of that class of ministers to which the author belongs ; who do not so much make themselves busy with the speculative opinions of their hearers, as with those subjects of personal character and principles of holy living, which may lead to solid, vigorous, permanent habits of piety and virtue. So far as error or truth in points of doctrinal theology affects this grand and primary object, so far they are insisted on, explained, and recommended or refuted in the pulpit ; but further than is necessary to this end, they are thought improper to be treated before a mixed congregation, many of whom are incapable of fairly entering into the argument, and most of whom probably need more to be impressed with the infinite importance of religion and of duty, and excited to personal interest in the affairs of the soul, than to be instructed in those speculations about which theologians are contending. These may be learned from books, in calm and sober retirement ; and may be discussed in confidential conversation, where there is room to explain, illustrate, and guard against misapprehension. They are proper subjects of private study, where they may be investigated fairly, the arguments on every side examined, and the open Bible be at hand, by which all may be tested. Serious inquirers may thus be instructed and improved. But there would be little edification to the majority of the flock from the introduction of such discussion into the pulpit ; and to refrain from it altogether, would not be *keeping back any thing that is profitable.*

There are only four discourses in this volume, which can in any proper sense be termed *doctrinal*, and these, in conformity to the remark we made above, may with more strict propriety be spoken of as containing practical views of doctrinal truths. The first of these is that *on the miraculous character of Jesus ;* a few extracts from which may serve to show the manner in which Unitarian preachers are accustomed to speak of their master, and in what terms of exalted honor they assert his authority.

" Every christian must be deeply solicitous to form just apprehensions of the character of Jesus ; neither to ascribe to him attributes which he would himself have disclaimed ; nor to derogate from that transcendant dignity, which belongs to him. We acknowledge with the great apostle, that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God ;

we earnestly desire to receive him in the elevated character, in which he claims to be received. It is not an inquiry of small moment, whether Jesus Christ is merely an extraordinary teacher and popular reformer, distinguished above his contemporaries, only by a superior sagacity and greater purity of life and manners; or a direct messenger from the Deity; whether his instructions are the suggestions of human reason, or the oracles of the living God; whether his doctrines and precepts are recommended only by common sense, expediency, self interest, or experience; or whether they have descended from heaven, arrayed in all the majesty of their sublime original."

"Let us, my friends, often and seriously examine our religious sentiments. It is not a matter of small moment what we believe. Our views in respect to the proper character of christianity and its divine author, must materially affect our conduct and happiness. The influence and extension of the religion in the world are essentially concerned in them. To receive the gospel only as a useful system of moral duty, and as an agreeable and wise theory of religious instruction; or, on the other hand, to regard it as a miraculous revelation from God, as a system of religious doctrine dictated by his inspiration, a rule of moral duty sanctioned by his express authority, and a disclosure of the final destiny of mankind made by his immediate illumination, are very different sentiments. To consider Jesus Christ as a wise and good man, however pre-eminent, or to honor him as an inspired teacher and miraculous messenger from God, are sentiments altogether dissimilar in their practical results, in the temper which they inspire, and the conduct to which they lead.

"God forbid, Christians, that our faith should be in any respect unworthy of the religion which we profess; or that our sentiments concerning Jesus his son should not correspond with the peculiar offices and the unrivalled dignity, with which God has invested him: For God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."* pp. 84, 85.

Of the other doctrinal discourses, two are connected in subject, being from the text, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* Phil. ii. 12, 13. In the first of these is considered *the power of man in regard to his salvation.* Having noticed the plea of inability, by which many seek to excuse their irreligion, who "pretend they do not, because they cannot, do as they would;" our author remarks, that there certainly is a degree of weakness in human nature, which renders man insufficient to attain the summit of moral perfection, without aid from God, and that this aid will be afforded only to those who are faith-

* Phil. ii. 9—11.

fully laboring to do what they have the power to do. "We are not," he says, "of the number of those, who assert that man is in no degree in these things dependant on God; nor of those, who represent him as a mere machine, incapable of voluntary motion, to be acted upon by an external and miraculous influence. In the formation of his moral character, we believe that man can do something, though we pretend not that he can do every thing; and that God will do much. I would speak with re-reverence, though he will not do all." These are the general sentiments which the two discourses are designed to explain. The first of them treats separately of man's *power*, and of his *duty* in this respect; which are evidently relative terms, and never would have been imagined to be separable, except for the strange perversions of reason to which the pride of human system has given rise. He first shows, that man's power to *avoid sin* is great, by an appeal to the representations of scripture, and to the conscience and experience of men; though he acknowledges that it is a power which may be weakened and even destroyed, by indulgences of sinful passions and desires. He then, by an appeal to the conscience and experience of his hearers, convinces them, that they have the further power of practising virtue and improving in holiness. We cannot forbear quoting this passage, which seems to us most powerful, and must have made strong impression on those to whom it was personally addressed.

"We next inquire, what is the power of man in regard to the practice of virtue, and his improvement in holiness? We appeal again to your personal experience. Will any then confidently aver, that he cannot acquire the virtues, which his religion inculcates; nor discharge his personal and relative duties? Will any one justly pretend that he cannot extend his knowledge of his duties, his interests, and his relations to another world and to God? Cannot every man enlighten and invigorate his christian faith and hope; and render the principles of religion more familiar to his mind; and give them a commanding influence over his conduct? Cannot every man learn the art of self-government, and acquire the regulation of his thoughts, desires, and passions, so that they may flow in the channel of innocence and usefulness? Is there any one, who cannot cultivate a spirit of kindness, forgiveness and gratitude? Will any man pretend that he cannot love God; nor become resigned to his will; nor cherish a filial confidence in his perfect wisdom and infinite goodness? Has not every man reason and conscience, the discerner, and judge, and guide of duty? Have not all of us peculiar and numerous advantages and means of knowledge, motives, and opportunites for improvement in wisdom and holiness? and when did any one seriously attempt to acquire a knowledge of his duty, apply himself to the various sour-

ces of information, and use the numerous helps which are afforded for this purpose, without attaining the object of his pursuit? When did any man resolutely undertake the improvement of his character, give himself to reflection, to self examination, to prayer, to the study of the scriptures, and to the society of good men, to the regular observance of the institutions of religion, to the practice of self-denial and self-government, to the strict discipline of his understanding, affections, words, and conduct, and not advance with a swift progress in goodness? These inquiries need no reply; you cannot doubt, that in these respects your power is adequate to your duties." pp. 162—164.

The other part of the subject, man's *duty*, is treated with equal force and solemnity. The object of the discourse, our readers perceive, is entirely practical; not an examination and discussion and overthrow of theoretical and metaphysical difficulties, by which theologians have contrived to embarrass the subject; but a simple appeal to the obvious language of revelation, and to the conscience and common sense of man, which show him at once that God has given him the ability to do good, and will consequently require it of him;—which is better than a thousand arguments to confute the pernicious notion that man is unable to do any thing, and must therefore wait till it pleases God to endow him supernaturally with the power. This we conceive to be the right way of combatting erroneous doctrine from the pulpit; the only profitable mode, because the only one that can in most cases be understood, and certainly the only one which will at the same time convince the understanding and affect the life.

In the next sermon a similar method is pursued. The opinion which the writer maintains respecting the doctrine of spiritual assistance, and the connexion of this with the preceding discourse, may be best shown from the words of the Introduction.

"The scriptures hold out the promise of aid, illumination and guidance from heaven. They often speak of the spirit of God, and of a divine influence on the human mind and character. We confide in this doctrine, and rejoice in it, as affording the highest encouragement to sincere and humble virtue. Although man, through the goodness of God, possesses within himself a power sufficient for the discharge of the requisitions, which are made on him; yet, at his best estate and in his highest advances, he is ignorant and imperfect. To him nothing can be more essential and desirable than the succour and direction of that Being, who is almighty and infallible. It is one of the cardinal excellences of Christianity, that it teaches this doctrine; and assures us of this aid; and explains the mode of its communication, as far as is useful, and perhaps as far as is possible, for us to apprehend it." pp. 171, 172.

The first object is to prove "the fact of such an influence being exercised or dispensed." The concluding paragraph under this head sufficiently exhibits our author's opinions.

"It is thus that this divine influence, sometimes denominated the grace of God, may approach us in various channels; in the ordinary operations of our own minds, or by the events and vicissitudes of life. By any modes, which the wisdom of God may suggest, he may work in us both to will and to do; and the doctrine of spiritual influences is no other than the doctrine of the particular providence of God, which extends its paternal solicitude to every individual; which affords to each one the means of knowledge and virtue as is best suited to his condition; which adapts the discipline of life to his improvement; and assists the virtuous proficiency of every one, as far as seems proper to infinite wisdom and goodness." p. 176.

He next speaks of "the mode of its communication;" that it is not irresistible, but wholly persuasive, not at all infringing the moral liberty of man; that its operations are not to be distinguished from those of our own minds; that it is not arbitrarily bestowed, but according to that universal and equitable rule of providence, by which more is given to those, who have well used that which they have. The sermon closes, like the other, with a practical application of the doctrine.

A similar general method to that which we have remarked in these three sermons, is pursued in the xivth, in treating of the doctrine of *Conversion*. The doctrine is treated altogether with a view to its practical effect. In all the allusions to a variety of opinions and false notions on the subject, not a word is said to excite hostile feeling toward those who may hold opinions different from those of the preacher, or to exasperate a dislike, and create prejudices against their doctrine, or language, or persons; but he applies himself directly to the consciences and hearts of those before him; he does not assume the air of a controversialist, or a combattant, and encourage them to go abroad, and wonder at and triumph over the follies and absurdities of others; he endeavours to bring them to look at themselves, and test their own characters by the truth; satisfied that the doctrines of the gospel are good for nothing, except so far as they promote the formation of sober, solid, rational piety and morality. We have no love for any other doctrinal preaching. We cannot conceive that any other should be profitable. Faith without works is dead. Right thinking is valuable only as it is accompanied by right living. All the truth in the world will not save him, "who holds the truth in *unrighteousness*." There is indeed another sort of doctrinal preaching, which is easier. It is easier to repeat our arti-

cles of faith, and insist on their saving efficacy in every sermon. It is far easier to declaim on modes and peculiarities of belief, and get up a holy zeal for maintaining the pure system of revealed doctrine. But calmly to set aside the wrong and fortify the right, and lead the hearers to condemn their own, rather than the errors of their brethren,—this is a task indeed; and those ministers, it appears to us, deserve no little commendation for their fidelity, who can pursue this course, unmoved by disappointment, and unseduced into the more easy, more flattering, and more ambitious, but less useful practice of agitating opinions, instead of "teaching and warning" men.

Of the sermons which are exclusively practical, some are upon subjects the most interesting and important which a preacher can select, and present the most sound and judicious views of christian morals and practical piety. We have not room for an analysis of them, but may convey a general idea of what they are by a few remarks and extracts.

It may be said of them, that they are eminently serious in all their views of life, duty, and responsibility. While they do not uphold a gloomy religion, built upon dark views of the condition of man, and the government of God, but on the contrary, imply that it is a cheerful thing as being a message of great joy from a benevolent parent; they yet represent it as demanding of us high duties, and calling us to a solemn account. They do not skim the surface of morality, and allow to the christian all that latitude, which the false liberality of the worldly would incorporate into their religion, letting down the standard of duty and purity to the inclinations of every individual. They set the standard of moral attainment high. They represent the pursuit of christian excellence to be arduous, and its success not the result of indolent or transient exertion. They show him who has entered the list for the prize, that there is some hard fighting to be done, some sacrifices to be made, and a long discipline of watchfulness and self government to be gone through. In this view we consider the volume as highly valuable; and we cannot help hoping that it may give to some,—who have suffered themselves to be persuaded, without knowing any thing about it, that liberal preaching, as it is called, is loose, flattering, accommodated to the taste of the worldly, and wholly wanting in the solemnity and pungency of the original gospel—more correct and candid notions respecting it.

As specimens of the serious preaching, to which we have here referred, we may point out Sermon iii., *on the comparative claims of Religion and the World;* which explains our proper

concern with the world, points out the dangers to which it exposes our religious characters, and enforces the necessity and reasonableness of a life strictly and entirely devoted to religion :—Sermon xii. containing *Directions for judging of ourselves* :—Sermon xv. *on the difficulties of Christian virtue ;* which speaks of the difficulty of conquering sinful habits, of avoiding the snares of temptation, and, sometimes, of submitting to the present sacrifices which are required :—Sermon xvi. which exhibits *the deceitfulness of sin*, and the tremendous evils which follow it :—Sermon xviii. which enforces the all-important maxim that DUTY *should be the supreme object* :—and Sermon xxi. *on the uncertainty of life.*

It is evident from the remarks we have made, that these sermons are in the truest sense religious and devotional. The duties of the first table are not neglected in the care to inculcate those of the second. Though they are really *moral discourses*, their morality is not of that sort which crowds away and neglects piety. Man's duties are all built on the foundation of his accountableness to God, and enforced by the idea of his relation to Jesus Christ and a future world. The two first sermons, *on the Incomprehensibility of the Deity*, are specimens of this devotional character ; which treat of the causes of this incomprehensibility, and the lessons of humility, charity, and faith, which it should teach us. Sermon xxii. *on the Christian's hope*, and xxiii. *on the doctrine of Immortality*, may be referred to also as illustrating our remark ; whose complete illustration, however, is to be found in the expressions of devotional sentiment which meet the eye on every page, and are interwoven with the train of thought upon every topic.

Another class of these sermons, and an important one, consists of those in which great stress is laid upon the gospel as a divine communication. This topic is frequently introduced, and much insisted on ; the authority of the religion is urged upon this ground, and men exhorted to its study, reception and practice, by reasons drawn from this source. Some of the most powerful and eloquent passages in the volume are amongst those, which maintain this claim of christianity to our implicit obedience and love, and treat of its infinite excellence and value. The fourth sermon, on *the reception of the gospel ;* and the sixth, entitled, *Christianity a divine communication ;* are examples. Also the seventh, *Christianity a rule of life*, and the eighth, *On motives to the distribution of the scriptures*, are full of these earnest declarations of the worth of the gospel, and of the importance of deep personal interest in it. We must be satisfied with a single extract.

"Do we regard the gospel in that serious light in which these considerations place it? We have faith in it; we would not ourselves think, nor would we have others suppose, that we do not believe it: But is our faith any thing more than some indefinite sentiment of its authenticity? We perhaps respect it as a valuable system of virtue and happiness; as a rule of duty sanctioned by reason and experience; as a fund of consolation abundant and sufficient for human necessities. The early impressions and prejudices of education, and the customs of society, have taught us to revere it. We are the friends of christianity; we cheerfully yield our support to its institutions; we have a satisfaction in its ordinances: But with all this we are deficient in our duty, we have not an adequate impression of its essential importance and proper character, unless we possess a deep conviction of its divine origin and authority; and until this sentiment is habitually associated in our minds with all that it teaches and commands. Let our hearts answer, whether this feeling is foreign from us; or if we constantly and cordially cherish it?

"We inquire, in the next place, if our conduct corresponds with such views of the gospel? Is it not to be feared that there are in this respect great and criminal deficiencies? We are criminally deficient, if the doctrines of christianity are not the subjects of our habitual and familiar meditation; if we can ever look upon them with indifference; if the sacred scriptures are not considered by us as invaluable; if their precepts have not in our regards an authority superior to all other considerations; if the ordinances of the gospel are not observed by us with punctuality and seriousness; if, in fine, christianity, in all its instructions, precepts and institutions, is not the subject of our deepest interest, and the authority to which we refer all our desires and purposes, all our pleasures and employments; if it is not the first object of our thoughts, respect, and affections.

"We must then condemn the indifference which we sometimes plainly express both in our words and conduct. We must regard, as incompatible with christian duty, the slight connexion which our religion appears to have with our ordinary duties and pleasures; the higher preference and interest which we discover in regard to other objects and concerns; the disuse and neglect of the sacred scriptures; and the strangeness and distance which the subject of religion actually holds in respect to many of us. With many persons, who flatter themselves that they believe the gospel, and who would consider themselves as injured, were they charged with being wanting in regard for it, it seems to have little more interest than the concerns of a foreign and distant country. It is not the subject of their public profession or avowed consideration. It does not distinctly show itself in their private conduct nor in their families. They make it no topic of instruction, advice, or persuasion with their friends or children. They furnish no proof of their christianity, but the equivocal testimony of a decent and orderly life, which a

common respect for society is sufficient to produce; or an occasional and careless attention to its public institutions; an attention, which, from whatever motives it proceeds, may perhaps be sufficiently accounted for in the force of early practice and education, the authority of public opinion, a listless curiosity, or the mere love of excitement and variety.

"Is such conduct, christians, consistent with the character of our religion? Does it answer the claims which a direct and immediate communication from God has upon us?" pp. 94—97.

After the full account that we have given, and the large extracts that we have made, it cannot be necessary for us to speak more particularly of the character of the volume before us. We have enabled our readers to form their own judgment. If we were to proceed as rigid critics, we undoubtedly might point out some defects of plan and execution, imperfections of style and unhappy modes of expression. We never have seen the volume which is not obnoxious to such criticisms. But we are too well satisfied, that this work is calculated to do good to the cause of religion, to set the example of exposing its trifling blemishes of the kind adverted to. Few volumes of better sermons are printed, or which we could recommend with greater assurance, that we were doing service to religion, by helping the circulation of a useful book.

The only point of consequence, in which we should differ much from the author, would probably be one, which does not at all affect the merit of the sermons, but is a mere matter of opinion in regard to their general structure. They appear to us to be hardly sufficiently *textual*. The text, in almost every instance, is prefixed to the discourse as a motto merely, and the subject is treated almost, in some cases entirely, without any reference to it. This we think to be an imperfection. We know that it cannot always be avoided; but as a general rule we should say, that the train of thought and manner of treatment of a subject should be made to *appear*, at least, to have been suggested by the text. The connexion between the text and sermon should be made as close and necessary as possible; and we should even prefer, that an exactly philosophical division of a subject should be sometimes sacrificed, for the sake of a division drawn from, or made to appear contained in the text. We cannot at present give all our reasons for this opinion, which we are sensible is only an opinion; but having taken this opportunity to state it, we will observe briefly, that our principal reasons are, we have always found that it is a mode more satisfactory and interesting to hearers in general; it

pleases them by its appearance of being more scriptural; it promotes their acquaintance with the scriptures, by inducing them to refer afterwards to the passage; and it aids their recollection of the topics of discourse, its arguments, truths, and illustrations, by giving them something to which they may be attached in their memories.

The original purpose of preaching was the exposition of scripture. To remark upon a verse instead of a chapter was a departure from the primitive mode; and to remark upon a subject instead of a text, is a still further departure. It is unquestionably on many occasions, and for many reasons, a better mode. But for constant use it is not so profitable. Christians in general care very little for the abstract discussion of some proposition in morals, however rich it may be in illustration or profound in thought. It interests them little more than a problem in mathematics. They do not perceive the use and application of it; it does not connect itself with their habits of reflection and trains of thought; it does not *come home to their business and bosom.* But what is built upon a passage of scripture, which they habitually feel intimately concerns them, and the lessons drawn from which they acknowledge to be of the utmost importance to them, they listen to with reverence and pleasure. It is like talking with an old familiar friend; they can understand it all, and they have perfect confidence in it; and it has an authority which the finest reasoning and most plausible eloquence never can obtain. Hence we find the deepest attention attracted by subjects purely scriptural; the recital of the most familiar parable is heard with greater silence, than the most powerful argument which is new. And those preachers who have attained the greatest popularity, and have produced the greatest effects, will generally be found to have dealt most largely in scripture subjects, scripture allusions, and scripture language. The veneration with which the Bible is regarded, aided by the associations of time and place, imparts authority and power to him who holds it in his hand while he expounds or exhorts. We are persuaded therefore, that the preacher who would be useful, should accommodate to every subject he brings into the pulpit some sentence, or expression, or incident, of holy writ, in such a manner that they shall be indissolubly associated in the minds of his hearers. The subject should never seem unconnected with the Bible; and although in writing thus he may, perhaps, compose much less perfect treatises, yet he will certainly preach far more effectual sermons.

ARTICLE XII.

Letters to Unitarians, occasioned by the Sermon of the Rev. William E. Channing, at the Ordination of the Rev. J. Sparks. By Leonard Woods, D.D., Abbot Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary, Andover.—Andover: published by Flagg & Gould. 1820. pp. 160.

Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists, occasioned by Dr. Woods' Letters to Unitarians. By Henry Ware, D.D., Hollis Professor of Divinity in the University at Cambridge.—Cambridge, published by Hilliard & Metcalf. 1820. pp. 150.

If religious controversy can be maintained separately from the abuses which are so liable to attend it, we think there can be but one opinion concerning its utility, among intelligent men. But the manner in which it has been too often conducted, has frequently led the peaceful disciples of Christ, of various denominations, to lament its very beginning, and to reprobate it altogether, from an apprehension, that in the heat of disputation, more will be lost in regard to the spirit of religion, than can be gained in respect to the letter. This is so striking an indication of a true christian temper, that we presume Dr. Woods did not mean to exclude every other denomination of christians, in times past, when he says, that "it has been the general sentiment of those, who are denominated *Unitarians* in this country, that *religious controversy* is undesirable, and of dangerous tendency: and that it is the duty of christians of different parties to look with candor on each others' opinions, and not to magnify, beyond necessity, the points of difference." We object, however, to the last half of the sentence, as an explanation of the first; for, if it be the main design of controversy, to distort the opinions of an adversary, and to exclude every thing like candor from the discussion of his sentiments and reasoning,—controversy should be discountenanced and reprobated, by the common consent of all good men, of all religious denominations. Since the learned gentlemen on the opposite sides of the disputed subjects before us, agree sufficiently in their views concerning the spirit and the decorum which belong to controversy on serious subjects, we cannot do better than refer our readers to their respective publications.

It is not our design to discuss any of the doctrines which are so ably handled in the works before us. Our readers are sufficiently aware which side of the controversy we think mainly and essentially true, and to which therefore, our partialities must necessarily lean. Still however, we should feel much regret, if the opinions which we deem true, and of infinite moment, were feebly defended, or if those which we deem erroneous and

pernicious, were not, in our judgment, fully and fairly refuted. Our great wish is to excite a general interest upon the subjects involved in the dispute, which has been occasioned by Mr. Channing's Sermon at the Ordination of Mr. Sparks. Professor Stuart's Letters, concerning the Trinity, have already occupied our attention ;—between those letters and the reviewers, let the public judge. We are saved from entering on the same discussion of Dr. Woods' Letters, by the thorough reply of Dr. Ware. But an account of the subjects treated, and a cursory view of the manner in which the respective individuals have conducted the controversy, seem to be due from us to our readers.

After his introductory letter, Dr. Woods proceeds to treat of the propriety of a creed, and to claim for the orthodox, some of the opinions represented as peculiar to unitarians, particularly as to the unity and moral perfections of God. He next gives the views of the orthodox respecting the character and government of God, and considers the proofs that the orthodox deny the moral perfections of God. He then proceeds to the distinguishing doctrines of Calvinism ; namely, total depravity, election, atonement, and divine influences, or, as in the technical phraseology of Calvinism it has commonly been denoted, *free*, *special*, or *irresistible grace*. Then follow additional remarks on representations in Mr. Channing's Sermon—object of Christ's mission—nature of holiness, and principle of moral government. The book concludes with a comparison of the practical influence of the orthodox and unitarian systems.

In his introduction, Dr. Woods informs those to whom his letters are addressed, why *they* are addressed, and what provoked him to write : " The subjects of the discussion on which I am entering, have been introduced by one who appears before the public as *your representative* ; and the manner in which he treats these subjects is, in most respects, not unlike the manner in which they have generally been treated by those, who have embraced the Arian or Socinian faith. This sermon is a fair specimen of the mode in which we have been accustomed to see our religious opinions opposed in the writings of unitarians. Now it must be allowed to be a sufficient justification of this attempt of mine, if I am fully convinced, that my opinions, and those of the orthodox generally, are misunderstood and essentially misrepresented by unitarians, and particularly by the author of this sermon. I am convinced of this."

Every honest man must applaud the motives here expressed, and look with impatience for the exposure of the ignorance and perverseness of a large body of christians, represented by one of their most distinguished divines. There are so many refinements in modern Calvinism, and so many artificial means employed to

give a milder expression to its harsh features, and a winning manner to an exterior naturally rude and repulsive, that it would be difficult to make a full portrait, which would be acknowledged for a likeness by any of its friends. But has Dr. Woods, let us inquire, pointed out any material errors in Mr. Channing's delineation of Calvinism, as far as it fell in his way to draw its outlines? It matters not with how many glosses, all bright and fresh, any adept in orthodoxy has for a moment dazzled our vision; the first and main object is to see the naked truth. Having obtained from the best formulas of Calvinists, at different periods, a clear annunciation of their belief, we are equally at liberty, either to believe with them, or to shew that such irrational and contradictory inferences flow from their doctrines, that they are absolutely incredible. Now, let us ask, what has Mr. Channing done more than this? He is accused by Dr. Woods of much more. We quote his own words:

"So far as this Sermon shall come under review, my remarks will relate chiefly to two points. The first is, its affirming that certain opinions belong peculiarly and exclusively to unitarians, when in fact they are held by the orthodox. The second is, the misrepresentations it makes of the opinions which the orthodox entertain, and of the reasoning commonly used to support them."

A little below, he quotes the following passage from Mr. Channing's sermon: "We regard the scriptures as the records of God's successive revelation to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelations of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception."

After reading this quotation, we expected to hear the old charge of want of reverence for the scriptures, iterated against unitarians. But what is our amazement, when, instead of this, Dr. Woods remarks,—

"It is implied in what he [Mr. Channing] says, that this sentiment of reverence for the scriptures is *peculiar* to *unitarians*. For he first expresses his design to lay before his hearers some of the *distinguishing* opinions of that class of Christians, in whose name he speaks, and then at the close says, that he has given their distinguishing views; that is, their views in distinction from those of the orthodox."

If Mr. Channing, in the division of his subject, had expressed himself exactly in the terms which Dr. Woods would make his readers believe, without any addition, still no fair disputant would endeavour to make the same use of Mr. C's. phraseology which is done in this instance. He would consider Mr. C's. expression of reverence for the scriptures, as a first principle, from which he started, and which he claimed only to hold in common with other

christians. But it was not enough for the Doctor to take things as he found them. In order to accomplish his purpose, he was obliged to snatch a *division* from the middle of the discourse, and place it before and after a passage near the beginning. This to be sure is a small matter, and only bringing together what the author took care to keep separate. All that the Doctor has quoted, is to be found in the sermon, and why should he be bound to the exact order in which it originally stood ? Lest our readers, however, should think it of some consequence, we will tell them the whole truth of the case.

Mr. Channing, in the introduction of his sermon, says, " I shall confine myself to topics on which our sentiments have been misrepresented or which distinguish us most widely from others." And, a little below, " I shall endeavour to unfold, 1st. the principles which we adopt in interpreting the scriptures, and 2d. some of the doctrines which the scriptures, so interpreted, seem clearly to express." Then follows the passage which Dr. Woods quotes—" We regard the scriptures as the record of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelations of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception."

There was a reason for this declaration. It is a declaration which every unitarian with whom we are acquainted, would make ; and it is a subject, too, concerning which, unitarians as a body, have been grossly misrepresented. Nothing more than this could Mr. Channing mean to imply.

We should dwell somewhat at large upon the other opinions which Dr. Woods charges Mr. Channing with claiming exclusively for unitarians, but which are held by the orthodox, if, in recurring to Dr. Ware's letters, we had not found a full and satisfactory reply. In a youthful theologian we should pass lightly over what seems to us to be so little worthy of a learned Professor. But it is lamentable to find one who should be a guide to the inexperienced, and who, we believe, is, by the natural vigor of his understanding, so capable of the office, deceiving himself, and confounding things most obviously distinct. Every person who heard, or who has read Mr. Channing's sermon, knows perfectly well, that all which is there said concerning the *unity* of God, is said in contradistinction to a *trinity* of persons, and a great part of his design was to shew that the two doctrines are irreconcilable. The trinitarian has an equal right to bring his proofs for three equal persons or *distinctions*, and to reconcile this theory of the manner of the divine subsistence with the unity of God. This, if any thing, was what it belonged to Dr. Woods to perform ; for it is incredible that he should think the author of the sermon

intended to assert, that any christians *denied* that God is *one being*, whatever absurdities might be mingled with their belief. Nor is it to be supposed, that he was ignorant of the many creeds and confessions, which begin with the declaration of a belief in one God, and defend it by adding *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghost*.

The same injustice we conceive to be done to Mr. Channing, when he is said to deny that the orthodox believe in the *moral perfections* of God. We are alike unable, as Mr. Channing, to perceive how their belief on this subject comports with their peculiar doctrines ; and it seems, according to Dr. Woods, that it does not belong to them to show their consistency. But this is the very point at issue ; for it is unreasonable to require any one to believe in what seems to him a contradiction, to reproach him for his want of faith, and yet take no pains to remove the difficulties, which he cannot surmount. We cannot but think Dr. Woods extremely unguarded (to use the mildest epithet) in this part of his letters. Neither Mr. Channing, nor any liberal christian, would affirm that the orthodox disbelieve a single moral attribute of Deity. On the contrary, it is well known, that in their abstract views, and in dwelling upon some of the divine dispensations, they are not wanting in a full expression of their belief in the moral perfections of God. But it is impossible for us to imagine, that when the genuine doctrines of Calvinism are in actual array before them, they should conceive of him as they ought, either as a just and merciful sovereign, or as a kind parent. These being our views, it certainly becomes us, on every proper occasion to make our solemn protest against such an unholy alliance of professions and doctrines, however sincerely they may be made and held by the same individual. We would not, however, and we claim no such right, charge him with the guilt of inferences from his doctrines, which, however conclusively they flow from them, he firmly denies. This is an infringement of those rules of charity, which should be held sacred by all ; and we hope we shall never be so far blinded by the zeal of controversy, as to lose sight of that law of love, implanted in the human heart, which forbids us to ascribe to others the worst motives which can be supposed to govern them, and to impute to them more degrading opinions, than they choose to avow.

In regard to the misrepresentations, which are said by the author of the Letters to Unitarians, to be found in Mr. Channing's sermon, and which also he affirms to be such as are commonly to be found in Unitarian writings, little need be said. It is a heavy charge, and supported by very slight proofs. Still, we have no doubt, it is brought in sober earnest, and we think it can be satisfactorily explained. When we propose a favourite

moral or religious doctrine or proposition to others, thinking that we understand all its relations and consequences, we are disappointed, perhaps grieved, and, it may be, mortified, that they perceive different relations and different consequences; and we are apt, in such cases, to think that those who come to these different results are chargeable with prejudices and partial views, and not we ourselves. Now it is certainly a right of the dissenting party, to disprove the doctrine by his own process, and, if it be an odious doctrine, to make it appear so. In doing this he will be very likely to excite our displeasure, and, it may be, incur the accusation, without any of the guilt, of impiety. More than this, which comes to the very point: we shall be prone to consider our antagonists as aiming to fix on us all the false and unworthy notions, which he intends merely to connect with our favourite doctrine. Does not this very nearly agree with the recent history of Calvinism? They who claim the exclusive title of orthodox, are continually lamenting the defections from their number, which they perceive around them; and, in some instances, more of anger than of compassion, seems to have been excited in the breasts of their champions; and it is natural enough that they should account for the loss of their numbers, by thinking that their doctrines are misunderstood or perverted.

Another thing which takes off the edge from this charge of misrepresentations, is the extreme difficulty of stating a Calvinistic doctrine, in such a manner that it will be acknowledged by those to whom it belongs. Every one must have felt this difficulty in regard to the doctrine of the trinity; for it is so impossible for even a *believer* in the term itself, and in the common formulas by which it is more fully expressed, to give an explanation of his views, to which all other believers of the doctrine will assent, that it can hardly be expected of him who *opposes* the doctrine, to contend against it in any shape in which it will be recognised by many of its friends. And we cannot with propriety be said to *misrepresent*, what has never been *definitely* or *intelligibly represented*. The same remarks apply, though not so completely, to the more distinguishing doctrines of the Calvinist.

We have already said more than we intended concerning Dr. Woods' letters; but there still remain a few cursory remarks, which we wish to add.

In the first place, it seems to us that Dr. Woods has very unnecessarily, and not much to the credit of his cause, begun and prosecuted his purpose, with a fixed determination to find Mr. Channing opposed to him in every particular; and that in doing this he has forgotten a part of Mr. Channing's design, as

expressed in the second division of his discourse. Mr. C. there says, "I now proceed to state some of the views, which we derive from that sacred book, [the scriptures] particularly those which distinguish us from other christians." He does not design, it appears, to state those views ONLY which distinguish Unitarians from other christians; but amongst others to state these *particularly*. But Dr. Woods does not see this distinction; and imagining that the liberal party disclaim all agreement with him, will insist upon it, that whenever Mr. C. states any of the views which he derives from the scriptures, he appropriates them wholly to himself and his friends. We have heard of Dr. Woods as a distinguished logician, and we have no doubt that he is so; but it is a most unfortunate oversight, in one who would preserve this reputation, to infer, that, because two individuals differ in particulars, therefore they must differ also in generals. We had before believed it possible, that there might be a general agreement, and specific differences.—We do not make these remarks to claim any nearer relation to the Calvinist than belongs to us. But we certainly do not wish to be, or to be thought, such monopolisers of truth, as to take offence at any of their approaches to our manner of reasoning and thinking. On the contrary, we are always rejoiced at every approximation to what we consider just views on religious subjects.

There is another specimen of reasoning in Dr. Woods' pamphlet, which appears to us rather singular. It is conceded by him, that much of the language of scripture, on which some of the peculiar Calvinistic doctrines are made to depend, is figurative; and that the figures are of a kind by no means similar to the accustomed modes of expression of the modern European languages. After this concession, what should we naturally expect him to subjoin? His opponents say, you should explain these figures, and represent the doctrines in terms that shall not be misunderstood. No, it is replied, these figures are scriptural, and no one can be blamed for imitating them; let metaphors be heaped upon metaphors; you may explain them, if you please, as you do those of the scriptures; but a rich, oriental style is the more impassioned and moving; and if the figures were explained, or put in literal expressions, more would be lost in emotion than would be gained in intelligibleness. Such are the fair deductions from the kind of defence which Dr. Woods makes of some of his calvinistic brethren. But, after all, we cannot but express our thanks for all that he would seem to give up or to qualify, in regard to the offensive peculiarities of calvinism, though many, doubtless, will look with fearful apprehension at any qualifications of what they consider the true orthodox faith.

This leads us to one remark further concerning the publication of which we are speaking. There appears, throughout, an unlooked for timidity in the author, which makes him shrink from a full view of what we had always considered to be calvinism, and of what, in the end, we find to be the *author's* calvinism. We do not charge him with intentional evasions; for we have no right to doubt that he intends to be as frank in the statement of his tenets, as we claim to be in that of our own. But we are persuaded that no system of theology can long rest secure, upon such a tottering foundation as this author has laid: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." It is gratifying to us, we confess, to find any of the technical phraseology of a religious system, which we think to be wrong, either abandoned, or vindicated with hesitation and doubt. It augurs well for liberal christianity; for it is here, as in many other occasions of strife among mankind, that certain watch-words of party serve more to rally its forces, and kindle the passions of its votaries, than any well-ascertained points of difference between them and their supposed enemies. But whenever a distinguished partisan, however confident he may at present be of the truth of his dogmas, either trembles at the consequences which appear to flow from them, or is brought with extreme reluctance to consider those consequences, there is some reason to hope, that his prejudices will ultimately become subjected to a sound understanding and an enlightened conscience.

Thus much concerning Dr. Woods' management of the controversy, on the side of calvinism. There is certainly much good, mingled with what we cannot approve, in his letters, and much that is plausible and ingenious; but they fail in that open and direct use of the means of attack and defence, which generally characterise the writings of fair men, in a good cause.

Dr. Ware's letters, we think, will be thought, by none, to fail in the particulars last mentioned. His course is never devious or obscure; nor can we perceive that he ever so forces the language of his opponent, as to make it express more or less than was intended. His work bears on the face of it, that it is the production of a writer who has a perfect confidence in his cause, founded on a thorough and intimate acquaintance with the bearing of the arguments he is to use and to meet. He takes no advantage of the mistakes, inconsequent reasonings, and in some instances petulant expressions of his opponent, which to a less forbearing controversialist would afford ample occasion of remark. Indeed we are at a loss which most to commend in this work—the variety of knowledge which has brought to every argument the requisite proofs and illustrations, the consummate

ability with which these materials are used, the beautiful perspicuity of arrangement and style, which places a discussion,—commonly among the most intricate,—within the reach of all readers of scripture of good understanding, or the excellent temper, which, while the reader sees that every argument is a victory, forbids any indication of consciousness of this, on the author's part. In all these important respects, we hesitate not to call this work a model in controversial writing. It gives us great satisfaction to learn that it circulates very extensively,* as we doubt not it will be allowed to be one of the most convincing proofs, which have been before the public, of the power of good sense and diligent and unprejudiced investigation, to show that the sacred writings contain a consistent and perfect system of faith ; and we do not suppose that the points in dispute can any where be found in so condensed, and at the same time, so popular a shape. We are sure that they cannot be treated in a temper of greater dignity and moderation, nor do we expect to see the claims of pure and primitive Christianity to respect, asserted with a richer eloquence, than in the last of the letters of Dr. Ware. Indeed they appear to us to be so conclusive on the subjects of which they treat, that we should not have touched upon the controversy at all, if it had not appeared to us to be a solemn duty, to exert what influence we have, to persuade all thinking and inquiring men, of all religious parties, to read the publications which have now fallen under our notice. We are unwilling that those who believe in the main as we do, should read either, without reading the other. And we would earnestly exhort all who are, or who think themselves to be Calvinists, to commence with Mr. Channing's Sermon, which occasioned this controversy upon Calvinistic doctrines ; or, if they begin with Dr. Woods, not to fail of reading, with as much attention, the answer contained in the letters of Dr. Ware. This is our sincere, and our only wish. Be the reader of what religious opinions he may, and whatever influence these writings may have upon his articles of faith, of one thing we are perfectly satisfied ; that, whatever apologies he may make for the manner in which Dr. Woods has managed his side of the controversy, it will be impossible for him to deny that Dr. Ware has approached the subject in a manner more open and ingenuous, and vindicated his cause by means more direct and plain and explicit, than the author whom he followed and opposed. With these earnest exhortations, we leave the subject; most grateful that this controversy has arisen ; most grateful, as

* We understand that another edition has been called for and is now in press.

well-wishers to the cause of pure and undefiled religion, for the effect it has produced already on the public mind, and confidently auguring for it a result, most propitious to the power and prevalence of the truths and spirit of the gospel.

ARTICLE XIII.

Historical documents and critical remarks on Unitarianism and Mahometanism, in reply to Mr. Henry D. Sewall. By the Rev. J. Feltus, Rector of St. Stephen's Church, New-York : A. Mercein. 1820. pp. 28.

Reply to the Rev. J. Feltus, Rector of St. Stephen's, on the alliance of Unitarianism and Mahometanism; with the Unitarians' appeal. By Henry D. Sewall. New-York : C. S. Van Winkle. 1820. pp. 30.

In our third number of this volume, we gave some account of the religious solemnity of laying the corner stone of a Church, designed for the use of the first congregational society in the city of New-York. This society was gathered in the spring of 1819. In May of that year, two clergymen of this place, returning from the south, officiated on the Sabbath, at the request of several gentlemen, in the hall of the medical society. A few days after, a meeting was held, of persons desirous of the establishment of a new congregation. They associated themselves with that object, became incorporated, and for temporary accommodation, procured a convenient room,—which they fitted up as a chapel,—where, with some interruptions, public worship has ever since continued to be solemnized by clergymen from this vicinity. On the 29th of April last, they laid, with appropriate religious services, the corner stone of a church, which they expect to occupy in the course of the winter.

In general this society has no uncommon cause to complain of being denied that respect and liberal estimation of their design, which they who show to others, prove that they feel entitled to themselves ; and while we do not forget that forbearance is not always a merit,—for there are persons, whose undertakings it is well understood opposition will not discourage, and whose motives it is felt to be something more than silly to question, —we would yet cheerfully give all their due praise to those who in these difficult times have exercised that thrice difficult virtue, charity to dissentients. In the pulpit indeed, that most eligible of positions whence to fall upon an adversary, there have oc-

casionally been used expressions, which, as they are best not used more than once, we will not repeat, though they have come to our knowledge. Nothing however took a tangible shape till in July last there appeared in the paper of a Mr. Stone, a communication* under the taking title "Unitarianism and Mahometanism," containing the often told story of a " negociation" attempted to be opened by " a cabal of Socinians," with the Moroccan ambassador to Charles IId. This gave rise to some remarks published a few days after in the same paper, and to these succeeded the pamphlets whose titles are prefixed.

The time and place where the scene of this portion of history is laid, are the audience chamber of the ambassador of Morocco, near the English court, in Aug. 1682. Out of the obscurity of that age, a voice has come, declaring that the African envoy being about to depart, his business with the rulers of the nation done, and the wind already " sitting in the shoulder of his sail," there appeared a cabal of Socinians, (videlicet, either Mons. Verzé alone, or Mons. Verzé

* The paragraph begins thus,—" The following interesting paper was handed to us by the Rev. F. J. Feltus, Rector of St. Stephen's Church in this City, and is now laid before the public as a curious historical document:

UNITARIANISM AND MAHOMETANISM.

It is a circumstance but little known, that in the reign of Charles the Second, the English Unitarians opened a negociation with the Mahometans; through the medium of the ambassador from the Emperor of Morocco, at that time accredited in England.

When this thing was stated to Dr. Priestley in the course of one of his controversies; the doctor thought proper to treat the subject with great contempt, as an invention got up to bring the Unitarians into disrepute. The evidence of this extraordinary fact however, is still preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth. Among the codices *manuscripts*† Tenisoniani, there is a thin folio marked 673. It contains four tracts; the first of which is the very letter to Ameth Ben Ameth, published by Dr. Leslie, written in a very fair hand.

On the preceding leaf are these remarks:—" these are the original papers, which a cabal of Socinians in London offered to present to the embassadour of the king of Fez and Morocco, when he was taking leave of England, Aug. 1682. The said embassadour refused to receive them, after having understood that they concerned religion. The agent of the Socinians was Monsieur Verzé. Sir Charles Cottrell, Kn. Mr. of Cerem: then present, desired he might have them, which was granted, and he brought them and gave them to me,—Thomas Tenison, *then* Vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields, Middl."

Then follow some extracts from the letter above mentioned, to the ambassador, and the communication closes with the certificate of Horsley that the latter as given in Leslie's works, and the memorandum of Tenison, as quoted above, are true copies from the originals in the Archbishop's Library, with which he compared them, Jan 15th, 1789.

† So Dr. Feltus—with a pertinacious contempt of the Latin accidence—invariably calls them.

with another kindred spirit, non liquet.) and proposed to him to make one trial more of his talent for affairs, in a piece of negociation, the object of which they with true diplomatic wariness, suffered not to leak out, any further than that it "concerned religion." The Moor, either thinking that he had had enough of diplomacy, or believing, with many more orthodox men, that religion was a thing best left to priests, declined the proposition; whereupon the other party, forgetting the caution which it is prudent to use with regard to state papers, and thinking it a pity, no doubt, that compositions so patiently elaborated, written in so "very fair a hand," and so carefully bound in "the thin fol. No. 673," should after all be lost, very courteously presented them to Sir Charles Cottrell, knt. master of ceremonies, in acknowledgment of his politeness experienced on the occasion, and took their leave. By Sir Charles they were given, it is said, to Thomas Tenison, then vicar of St. Martin's in the fields. Dr. Tenison deposited them in the archiepiscopal palace at Lambeth, and, derived either from this source, or some other,—in the simplicity of our hearts we affirm, we know not which is designed to be implied,—one of them saw at last a moment's light in a controversial work of Leslie.

Time sped. His dusky excellency reposed from public cares in the cushioned halls of Garbieh. Mons. Verzé, and the nameless philosopher,—the associate of his labours, if associate there were,—slept soundly with their fathers, and as soundly slept the tale in which they figured, in the undusted folios of Charles Leslie. There, after a century's lapse, Bishop Horsley found it, and having learned to his thorough satisfaction, in the often fought fields with Priestley, how little slender arguments avail, resolved to try the strength of a stout and valiant implication, and set up this, a most impressive scare-crow, to cover his retreat. Priestley laughed at the man of straw, and went on his victorious way. In possession of Leslie, Horsley, or Gregory, Dr. Feltus of St. Stephen's found him; and not doubting, that yet, with dexterous management, he might be made to do good service, set him up in a column of the Commercial Advertiser, like a bashful rogue in the pillory, with "Unitarianism and Mahometanism" branded in great characters on his forehead, to bear the peltings of whomsoever it may concern; and lest his testimonials should seem in any point deficient, the same gentleman has established the characters of Tenison and Leslie by references to "*the* Biog. Dic." by which we find, on turning to the names, we are to understand that inexpugnable authority, the universal biography of Lempriere.

We would not willingly spoil innocent recreation, nor act the part of those vexatious persons, who before a good story has had justice done it, come in with some homely fact to dull the point,

and stop the merriment; but we think it has had a fair chance, and that we shall not be thought rude or precipitate, if like Trinculo, we now "let loose our opinion, hold it no longer."

In the first place, if the paper published is authentic, and the second-hand story of Dr. Tenison is true, that it was offered to the misbelieving legate, it is a matter of entire unimportance. It is an insulated fact. It is nobody's business. Allowing the whole to be as stated, it amounts to nothing more, than that a French *savant*, or a French adventurer, paid his respects to the ambassador on his departure, either to offer him a disinterested compliment, or to make a little interest for himself, and either brought or did not bring with him—it does not appear which,—a friend to share in the sunshine of favour which he anticipated. To ensure a duly honorable reception, he appears to have prepared himself with an offering like those with which the improvisatori besiege the doors of a traveller, on his arrival in one of the cities of Italy, one of which, an original composition given to a friend, we have before us. Two most philosophic treatises had he written, with which he was pleased, as authors are wont to be with their treatises; but distrusting the taste of Christendom, and fearing that should he look to that quarter for his reward, he must content himself for life, like Milton, with a forethought of fame, he resolved to trust his reputation with the children of Ishmael. Or, as probably, wishing to turn the versatile talents of his nation to account, he chose this way for one as promising as any, to recommend himself, thinking, that access once found into his excellency's graces, he might get the first vacant place of some cadi or dervise, or haply find employment as an engineer on the double wall of Fez. However this might be, he brought his papers, and with them a dedicatory epistle, containing as many concessions of faith at the expense of honesty, as dedications were required to do by the practice of the age. The characteristic politeness of the subject of the grand monarque, being met however by a reserve as characteristic on the other part, with great vacancy of stare, and curling of mustachios, he presented his writings to the first person who asked him for them, with a complaisance altogether surprising, when the circumstances are considered; for he thus put into the possession of an English knight, papers, containing sentiments, which, according to his own affecting account would, if divulged, expose him to "fire and thunder, and gaols, and swords of princes, bishops, courts, prisons and inquisitions,"* and all other evils, natural and artificial, which extreme apprehension could conceive, or Parisian volubility set forth in words. On this dedicatory epistle (doubtless a remarkable opening of a treaty) is the

* Dedicatory epistle in Dr. Feltus' pamphlet, p. 12

foundation of the history of a *negociation* built. Whether one person or two were privy to it, is doubtful, for sometimes the singular number* is used, and sometimes mention is made of two philosophers; but that this dangerous "cabal of Socinians" consisted at most of but two, appears on the face of the dedication itself, the author or authors of which are at much pains to account, "for the slenderness of their persons, parts and retinue," by which may or may not be understood, the spare visages and thread-bare uniform of Grub-street. "Our people," say they, "are numerous in Poland, in Hungary, in Holland as well as England, but being under the threats of such unchristian persecutions, we cannot open ourselves, nor argue touching our faith, but—to the endangering our lives and fortunes. Countenance therefore this philosophical plainness (that's part of our profession) which emboldens *us two, to offer you rather than fail, even a mess of our own trade.*"—But in vain the attempt, whether to dedicate or to treat. Alike in vain the graces of him or them that appeared, and the apologies for them that appeared not. The phlegmatic Mussulman was impracticable, and the disappointed author went his way. Ah! could the unhappy Verzé, when he retired from the presence of the cross-legged and cross-grained Osmanlee with quicker pace, and less self-complacency than he came, could he but have known that his despised dedication would fill a century after the "speaking trump of fame," and be called by an English prelate "the opening of a negociation with his excellency Ameth ben Ameth, ambassador of the Emperor of Morocco, at the English court,"† vanity would have brought her precious balsam, and the presence-chamber been emerged from with a most buoyant step.

What particular ultimate plan might be had in view in this "opening of a negociation," we profess ourselves not sufficiently versed in tricks of state, to be able to determine with much certainty. The first object, we think it is sufficiently apparent, was to introduce Mons. Verzé to the notice of him of Barbary,‡

* "Therefore *I say*," Dedicatory epistle in Dr. Feltus' pamphlet, p. 9. "Those princes *I mentioned*," Do. p. 10. "who are but *two* single philosophers." Do. p. 9.

† Horsley's Letters to Priestley, p. 266.

‡ "We herewith present unto your excellency a faithful transcript of that letter,—because it is a piece of rarity and learning; and chiefly for that it is the foundation on which we build another small piece or two in the same language;—the which we here *dedicate* likewise unto your emperor, to your excellency, and to his Mauritanian subjects, *the which comprehends the main design of our waiting on you at present.*" Ded. Epis. in Dr. F's pamphlet p. 7.

and set him afloat on the tide, which, "taken at the flood leads on to fortune;" but whether the ulterior plan of operations of the aspirant was to convert the Mahometan world to the faith, or to try his hand at an expurgated edition of the Koran, as he sometimes seem to hint,* or only to play the part of the more illustrious Gaul of later days, the Egyptian Imaum Buonaparte, we confess we know not. If it was to signalize his ingenuity by pointing out some resemblance between the christian doctrine, as he understood it, and the doctrine of the prophet, hard though the task might be, he would have in undertaking it the sympathy of Dr. Feltus; for (contrary, we own, to what we thought the design of his work) that gentleman seems to think this a point to be maintained by his own friends, and insists that the doctrine of the prophet bears a nearer resemblance to orthodoxy than to unitarianism.† Or if he designed to conciliate Mahometans, by shewing them that in one important point, the unity of God, they agreed with some Christians, it was but repeating the unprofitable attempt which Trinitarians have again and again made with all zeal, (insudantes operi, as Griesbach has it,) to conciliate the eastern idolaters, by persuading them that in the doctrine of the trinity, there is a coincidence between the Christian system and the Hindu mythology. Whatever his purpose was, he certainly kept it with uncommon care to himself, rejecting the Latin language, which he could write, and his excellency might have got some mufti to interpret,—the French, which was his own expressive mother-tongue, and which the Mahometan, by means of his knowledge of Lingua Franca, might have spelt out,—and the Arabic, in which it is not to be doubted he had taken care to accomplish himself,—rejecting these, to vent his heresies in English, as if consulting the exclusive and special convenience of the objects of his terror and aversion, the orthodox authorities of church and state. But whatever his plan or expectations might be, it is certain that he might flatter himself with the prospect of monopolizing the advantage contemplated. He kept his secret as carefully as the late Stonington discoverer of a continent of tame seals. He signed no letter, called no names, appropriated not even his dedicatory oblation in any less equivo-

* Do. p. 9. "Those contradictions were foisted into the scattered papers found after Mahomet's death, of which in truth the Alcoran was made up," et al.b.m.

† "Mahometanism, in many respects has much stronger claims (meaning probably, a much closer resemblance) to orthodox Christianity, than Unitarianism." Do. p. 24.

cal way than that which writers use, when they put beneath their dedications "the author,"—a phrase which carries meaning to the reader far seldomer than they think,—and succeeded even in keeping his associate so wholly in the back ground, that even the name of that most philosophic person has not struggled down to our times. As to having had an understanding with Unitarians, if this were not disproved by the trouble he takes to account for his coming alone, the idea would be put at rest by the reply made to Leslie by Emlyn, the principal Unitarian of the time, who must, if any man, have been privy to such a measure, and whose veracity no one will venture to call in question. "Forasmuch," says he, (Tracts vol. II. p. 93,) "as I can learn nothing of any Unitarians of any such address from them, nor do you produce any subscribers' names, I conclude no such address was ever made by any deputed from them."*

It will be seen from what we have said, that, except as we are friends to the truth of history, we are as indifferent as possible, whether the paper, which some call with the author an *epistle dedicatory*, and others call a *diplomatick note*, was in solemn earnest designed to be presented to the Mauritanian or not. Yet forasmuch as we are animated by that same disinterested and ingenuous regard† to historical verity, which induced Dr. Feltus to put the story in the paper, as an historical document "new and rare," we will go on to say in the second place, that we believe it to be all a fraud. There are many thoughts and expressions such as very obviously no one would be likely to select in conveying his own sentiments, but which yet a writer would very naturally use concerning sentiments of which he himself thought ill, while assuming the character of an advocate for them. If such a paper were really designed for a Moorish ambassador, there is no reason why it should be written in English, but all reasons against it. If it were expected to fall into the hands of the English master of ceremonies, this would be the language chosen. If a real bona fide dedication were intended, it would not be likely to go at such length into dangerous subjects. But if a forgery, the form of a dedication would be likely to be chosen as having enough of probability to make the fraud pass—a thing which the shape of a formal proposition would forbid. Into this, great care would be taken to press obnoxious sentiments, and between the two, dedica-

* For an account of the character and sufferings of this excellent confessor, See Christian Disciple, vol. I.

† "In publishing the documents above referred to, I had no intention whatever, to enter into any doctrinal discussion. It was a simple communication of historical fact, known indeed to the learned, but with which the public were little acquainted." p. 4.

tion, and *projet* of a treaty, we might expect a non-descript production, like that which we find. If all this could be got over, it is quite too much for belief, that there should be given up without compulsion to an English officer, a paper declaring opinions, the very suspicion of which, the authors say, exposed them to all sorts of persecutions.

And to this internal evidence against the authenticity of this paper, and much more, which we have not room to remark on, but which will be manifest to every reader, there is no unsuspicious external evidence to oppose. No proof has been given that the memorandum of Tenison is genuine ;—no proof that this paper was in the Lambeth library, one month before Horsly examined it in 1789. A presumption against its being there at the time pretended, is afforded in the fact that it was not cited, except by Leslie, at a time, when religious controversy ran very high, and with proper management, it might have been made to do excellent service. But waving this, and granting that, according to the memorandum, it was given to the archbishop of Canterbury, by a person who himself received it from a Frenchman, which Frenchman had first offered it in his presence to the Moroccan envoy ; we still have, not to say no proof that this man was an Unitarian agent, but no proof that in any sense he was an Unitarian himself. We believe that (if a real personage) he was neither ; but an agent of enemies of Unitarians. The treasonable dedicatory epistle was first made public in a work of Leslie. He offered no proof that it was authentic. He introduced it with these words only, " I will here present the reader with a rarity, which I take to be so, because of the difficulty I had to obtain it." He does not insist on the inferences which he pretends to draw from it, by any means with such urgency as we should expect from one entertaining his views, if he believed it genuine. We suppose no one has patience to read his six dialogues, but we have turned them over, and have not observed that he recurs to this letter any where after the remarks made on producing it. He seems to avail himself of it timidly, as if he feared to make it of consequence enough to expose it to the chance of detection ; and when its genuineness had been called in question by Emlyn, he passes this over in his " answer to the examination," though he goes fully into the other points in dispute. We believe that he knew more of its history than it would have been for his credit to acknowledge. To say nothing of Bishop Burnet's testimony to his character, (Burnet's Hist. vol. iv. pp. 278, 279,) his treatment of Tillotson, in publishing extracts from the sermons of that prelate, pretending them to be the work of a Socinian, shows him to be a man capable of almost any dishonesty. He was a bigot in an age when sound

doctrine was thought an omnipotent dispenser from fair dealing; —an intriguing spirit, in an age of unprincipled intrigue,—attached to a political cause which never flourished by any thing else, —connected with persons to whom a talent for it would above all things recommend him. He was capable of a plot like this; and if he were so happy as to find a suitable instrument among those of whom Johnson says,

"All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows,"

the opportunity would not have been lost on him. In every view we take of it, it seems to us far less probable, that this was an emissary of Unitarians, of any sort, to get them into repute abroad, than an orthodox emissary to bring them into discredit at home.

This attack has caused us no uneasiness for the prosperity of the Church in New-York. Reproach so very obviously unmerited, commonly serves the party assailed. Truth has scarcely a better ally than the dislike which would injure, but knows not how; and to a society which has members that can reason and write like Mr. Sewall, it may confidently be said, in the words of his motto, *Fear not, little flock.* If the author of the other pamphlet would take our advice, he would forthwith discard the argumentum ad invidiam, if he knows what that means, from his controversial armoury. It always prejudices a good cause, and commonly betrays a bad one. The more that is said in this way, with the worse grace will it by and by be retracted. He perfectly well knows, that it can be said with no more truth, that the Unitarians of New-York are disposed to become or advocate Mahometans, than that he regularly officiates every Saturday with a sash over his shoulders, in the synagogue in Mill-street. We beg him to remember, that if Unitarianism could be destroyed with such weapons, it would have been long ago defunct; and if he is not aware of it, we inform him, that an opinion that Unitarians are not wholly excluded from a share in that charity which "thinketh no evil," has of late been gaining ground, at least in this vicinity. We recommend it to his adoption.

ARTICLE XIV.

Tracts designed to inculcate moral conduct on Christian principles. Published by the Christian Tract Society in England. 5 vols. 18mo. Boston. Wells & Lilly.

The religious community have cause to feel much indebted to our publishers, for putting them in possession of this admirable collection of moral and religious tracts. A work of this nature has hitherto been a desideratum. Some of the religious tracts in

circulation are of decidedly injurious tendency, and, if there were no antidote in their stupidity, we should fear might exert a pernicious effect on the public sentiment. In others, as in some of the publications of Miss More, erroneous opinions are so intimately blended with just, and such a charm thrown over them by the power of the writer, as not unfrequently to leave us doubtful whether the impression likely to be produced is such as we could conscientiously encourage; whether most good is likely to be done by the just views, or evil by the wrong. The republication of the Christian Tract Society's collection takes away all excuse for circulating bad tracts for want of better. This collection makes a work very near to perfect in its kind. It consists of dialogues, essays, addresses, and in great part of fictitious narratives, which, besides the merit they possess as specimens in that kind of composition, which is not small, have that of enforcing with great felicity and power, each of them some important religious truth. The stories of William's Return, and of Good Luck and Good Conduct, for example, are in the very best style of works of this nature. We recommend it with perfect confidence to heads of families, who wish to put into the hands of children and dependants a work suited at once to interest, and in the most important respects to profit them.

INTELLIGENCE.

The Evangelical Missionary Society in Massachusetts.—The annual meeting of this institution was holden on Thursday, 5th October, in the vestry of the West Church, Boston. The discourse was delivered by the Rev. Abiel Abbot, of Beverly, from Gal. iv. 10. *It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.* The collection after the discourse, was $83.25. The following donations have been made within the last half year, exclusive of a large number of smaller sums from individual contributors, for which we have not room.

Through the Rev. Wm. E. Channing, donation of a parishoner,	$20 —
Through Rev. Charles Lowell, balance of the contribution from his Society,	19 —
From Ladies of the New North Society, Boston,	44 24
From members of the New South Society,	95 —
From members of Second Church, Middle Street,	97 —
From members of Brattle Street Church,	143 —
Through Rev. A. Abbot, collection from ladies in his parish, in Beverly,	35 52
From the Ladies' Cent Society in Concord, through the Rev. Dr. Ripley,	7 21
Rev. Dr. Bancroft, collection from the Ladies in his parish at Worcester,	43 —
"Social Circle," in Northborough,	15 —

The officers of the Society were rechosen, except that the Rev. F. Parkman is secretary, in place of Rev. S. Ripley, who declined, and Benjamin Guild, Esq. is treasurer.

Society for employing the Poor.—We have seen an uncommonly modest, sensible, well written pamphlet, explaining the views of a society lately established in this town, which has for its object the employment of the female poor. We are fully impressed with the belief, that one of the methods necessary to be adopted in order to diminish the evils and temptations and prevent the spread of pauperism, is the systematic provision of employment for those who are suffering for the want of it. Idleness is the source of all vice amongst the poor, and this whether it be voluntary or not. And certainly it is doing a great good to provide for those, who desire to labour, but cannot find work, and are suffering for the need of it, that occupation which shall at once relieve them from immediate distress, and from the destructive temptations of a state of idleness. We certainly wish all success to this society. Its design is excellent; and so far as we can judge without having witnessed its actual operation, the provisions for carrying it into execution are exceedingly judicious. Experience, however, is the only test; and we earnestly recommend to our philanthrophic readers to inquire concerning its measures and to examine into its success, and if they find it likely to do the good which we think it promises, to enter cordially and perseveringly into its support. The following abstract of the pamphlet abovementioned, will give the necessary information to those who have not seen it.

"The design of this society is strictly charitable. It is intended to relieve want, and, at the same time, by promoting habits of industry, order and frugality, to diminish the causes of indigence. It will bestow nothing, but as the reward of labor. It is not, however, to be supposed, that the proceeds of the industry employed will reimburse the expenses of the society. Experience has proved that such institutions cannot support themselves, and that, with the utmost care and economy, there will still be an annual deficiency to be supplied. It is not to take away the necessity of *giving*, but to furnish the means of giving in the most useful way, that this society is formed."

"The price paid by the society for labour will in general be considerably lower than the ordinary rate of wages. The necessity for this is obvious. If full wages were paid, many might be induced to leave regular employment in order to obtain work from the society. But it is only those who are unable to obtain work for themselves, and who prefer even low wages to idleness and beggary, that we may wish to draw to our doors. On the other hand, the common standard price will be charged by the society for the labour done. Were it not so, a temptation would be offered to withdraw work from the valuable class of labouring poor, and bring it to the society, thus depriving many industrious persons of the occupations on which they depend. Such an effect, it is manifest, would increase instead of diminishing the evil, and would be directly opposite to the main design of the institution."

"The first meeting of the subscribers was holden on the 27th day of January, A. D. 1820, when the constitution was read and approved, and signed by twenty-two ladies." The institution went into operation on a small scale, March 1st: and from the reports of the managers it appears, "that more than two hundred persons applied for work in March, April and May, and to about half only of them could employment be given, and that in very small quantities, the whole amount of payment for work not exceeding two hundred dollars. The applicants have hitherto behaved with great propriety, and have expressed great satisfaction in the prospects afforded by the institution, and much gratitude for the smallest supply of work. Most of them have appeared very destitute; a large part of them are widows with families of young children; the rest are principally mothers of

families, whose husbands are either unable to procure employment or negligent about providing for their families, and leave to them the task of maintaining their children and themselves. Should this society meet sufficient encouragement to enable it to relieve this class of the poor, by furnishing them with work, the community may retain them as respectable members; but without such aid, they must, in all probability, be reduced to beggary, with its consequent degradations."

The report of the Managers for the second month states "that about eighty of the women, who applied during March, have been visited at their houses. They have all been found objects for the charity of the society, and apparently without bad habits. The work has always been returned, and no improper feelings have been expressed by those, who have applied for it without success."

OBITUARY NOTICE.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.]

Died, Sept. 8th, 1820, at Shelburne, Mr. ROYALL W. SMITH, aged 21 years, son of the Rev. Preserved Smith. of Rowe. He was a graduate at Williams' College, in 1818, where he distinguished himself as a scholar, a companion, and a christian. In the choice of a profession he devoted himself to theology. For the purpose of pursuing his studies, and of preparing himself for the Christian ministry, he went in Oct 1818, to the University at Cambridge, where he might store his mind with useful knowledge, and be free to adopt that system of religious faith, which, after patient and scrupulous inquiry under able and learned Professors, should appear to him to be founded on scripture. Here he remained about a year, assiduously engaged in the acquisition of knowledge, and in a conscientious search after Divine Truth. He considered all branches of useful knowledge important to a Christian minister, as by them his mind would be strengthened, and he be enabled to urge with more power and effect the doctrines of Christianity. His range of study was too great for his constitution, which does not appear to have been ever strong; it was found that in the ardour of inquiry and assiduity of application, his health began to decline, paleness had taken the place of freshness, cheerfulness had in some measure been succeeded by pensiveness, his strength was diminished by wasting disease, the symptoms appeared alarming to the physician he consulted, and he was obliged, though with much reluctance, to remit the intenseness of his application in the sacred inquiries in which he was engaged. After some weeks of careful but unsuccessful exertions to restore his health, without giving up his favorite pursuits, he left Cambridge in April last, for Rowe, in hope of soon returning with fresh vigour, to renew his studies with increased ardour. But he was disappointed. The symptoms, which he carried away with him, were suspected by many who saw him, and were familiar with him, to be the symptoms of death. He continued seeking relief from his disorders, amid the anxiety of friends and the hopes of christians, until he was seized with the typhus fever, which hurried him to the grave.

His literary attainments were highly respected by those who had an opportunity of knowing them. While at College, he was studious and diligent, and made rapid advances in sound learning; and while at the Theological School, he judiciously apportioned his time for human and divine knowledge. He was one who valued time, and was resolved that none of

it should be wasted in useless pursuits, or in trifling conversation, but that all of it should be used 'to the Glory of God.'

His Theological attainments, though much interrupted by sickness, were deserving very high praise. He considered the Christian minister as bound to study the scriptures, rather than the metaphysics of the schoolmen; from the former to learn what Christianity is and to prepare himself for preaching the Gospel of Christ. He pursued this course, and conscientiously came to the result, that the doctrines of Unitarianism are the doctrines of the Bible. The writer of this notice, has often heard him express his decided disbelief in the Orthodox doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement, and his firm belief in the supremacy of the Father, and in human salvation only by the free grace of God the Father.

His modesty was such as to reserve part of what he possessed, and always to indulge us in receiving more than we expected. There was no danger of trusting him for judicious remarks; he conveyed more than his modesty would allow him to express. Also it may be said that, though none ever found any fault in him, he was better than he pretended or seemed to be. Modesty is one of the surest tests of goodness, and in him it was genuine. Though his sensibility might seem excessive, it in reality never amounted to a fault. In his moral character, it was ennobled to tenderness and respect for others. He not merely gave deference to others, but, in humility, seemed 'to prefer them.'

His moral character was not only free from dissipation and unlawful propensities, and pure from moral stains, but there was something positive in it. All that he was, was on the side of rectitude. His piety was carried into life so as to bear with composure and christian patience the evils of the human condition, and to perform the duties of a candidate for Heaven, with fidelity and cheerfulness. He endeavoured always to receive benefit from acts of devotion, believing that the Grace of God is given to every one with perfect impartiality, and that, if it be inoperative, it is so because man resists the influences of the Holy Spirit, and not because God does not afford them. He was a firm believer in Christianity, and a communicant at the table of our Lord. He considered and with reason, the Communion of the Supper, obligatory on all believers in Christianity, by the authority of Christ, and also recommended by its beneficial tendencies to gratitude and devotion.

His attachment to religion was manifested in his choice of the ministry for a profession in life, in prosecuting the studies relating to it with diligence and zeal, and in making some worldly sacrifices on its account. He expressed a willingness to submit to more worldly privations, if it were necessary for religion. Little did he think, that in the mean time he *was* sacrificing his life in preparing for the Christian ministry.

One year ago he was in the vigour of youth, in the cheerfulness of health, in the vivacity of hope, in the ardent diligence of study; but in this short period what a change! He is wasted away, and 'returned to the dust.' May his death give warning not in vain; but may those who knew him consider, that they too, in one year, nay in one week, may be reckoned with those who *have been* on the earth, but who are now gone to their eternal home. 'Be ye therefore ready.'

ORDINATION.

A NEW Congregational Society has been within the last two years formed in Springfield, in this state, and a beautiful Church erected and given to

them, by Jonathan Dwight, Esq. On Thursday, Oct. 12, the Rev. William B. O. Peabody, was ordained their pastor. The services were peculiarly interesting to a crowded auditory. Rev. Dr. Bancroft, of Worcester made the introductory prayer. Rev. Dr. Ware, of Harvard University, delivered a Sermon from Cor. xiii. 9th, "*We know in part.*" Rev. Dr. Porter, of Roxbury, made the ordaining prayer. Rev. Dr. Prince, of Salem, gave the charge. Rev. Mr. Francis of Watertown, gave the right hand of fellowship. Rev. Mr. Willard, of Deerfield, made the concluding prayer. The music under the direction of Mr. Albro, was uncommonly fine.

Notice of the New-York Edition of Lord Byron's Works, published by William B. Gilley. 1820.

We do not know that there is, in the whole compass of English literature, a poem more thoroughly immoral, than Lord Byron's *Don Juan*. It is written in a sort of drunken defiance and mockery of all that is decent and honorable. Its wit consists in degrading the better and holier affections by associations with something mean and vile. Its subjects of ridicule are religion, and virtue, and human misery. The laugh raised is sometimes such as its author might enjoy, if he were to go to a hospital to torment the sick and dying, and then jeer at their outcries and uncouth contortions; and at other times, the merriment is of the same character, as he might feel in decoying a modest and respectable woman into a brothel, and making jests upon her confusion and tears. The brutal and unmanly attack upon his wife, near the commencement of the poem, corresponds with all that follows; and, we may add, corresponds but too well with some other publications of its author. The writer of this work has exhibited himself in the lowest state of moral degradation, as a profligate and shameless buffoon, taking pleasure in exciting disgust and contempt. His morbid love of being talked about in some way or another, his feverish craving after notoriety, the great secret of many of his vices and follies, will hardly find gratification hereafter by the same kind of writing. Since the publication of this poem, he has put it out of his power to surprize the world, or excite its attention, by any outrage upon decency, however loathsome or strange. It has been said that there are passages of fine poetry in this publication. It may be so. We are not intrepid enough to admire and relish fine poetry, when found in such a connexion. According to the best theory of taste, the crimson of a rose-cancer would be as beautiful as that of the rose itself, if it were not for our associations; and when we can so far overcome the force of these associations, as to be delighted with the former, we may then, perhaps, look out for the beauties of Don Juan.

We are informed that when the two first cantos of this poem were sent in manuscript to England, Lord Byron's publisher, Mr. Murray, declined to publish them. They were accordingly returned to the author. He sent them back with some alterations, and they were then published, but not with Mr. Murray's name. Two additional cantos have since been sent, which that gentleman, we understand, positively declines being the agent in giving to the public. We wish that the conduct of some of our American booksellers did not present a striking contrast to what has just been stated. No sooner did this infamous poem appear in England, than an edition of it was issued from one of the presses in New-York; and now, within a few weeks, we have an edition of Lord Byron's works, in

which this poem is, *for the first time*, incorporated, and published by William B Gilley, of New-York. We should rejoice if there should be moral feeling enough in the community to leave the edition upon the publisher's hands. The man who would commit such a work to the press, and increase, as far as possible, its circulation, by connecting it with the other works of Lord Byron, would, without doubt, print as many copies of Voltaire's *Pucelle d'Orleans*, as he could hope to find a sale for.

The want of moral feeling discovered in this readiness to circulate the worst poison through the community, for the sake of some paltry profit, is rendered more glaring by the hypocritical squeamishness, which has been manifested by many of these same booksellers of New-York, about the sale of works of a different character. Their consciences are of such a peculiar sort of tenderness that they cannot sell, for instance, Mr. Buckminster's or Dr. Freeman's Sermons, but are quite ready to publish and sell Lord Byron's Don Juan, or the most licentious of Moore's poems. It may be said, that we ought rather to speak of those under whose direction the booksellers act, than of the booksellers themselves. Perhaps we ought. Let the blame attach wherever it may belong. At all events, it is one of the most striking examples of the fact, that a zeal for orthodoxy has often very little to do with a zeal for religion or morality.

How long the citizens of New-York will continue to submit with patience to the police, of which their booksellers are the ostensible agents, established for preserving their orthodox faith from contagion, is their concern rather than ours. We only wish that they would insist that an equally rigid guard should be kept over their morals, and over what is really essential in their religion.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

We find in a copy, which has reached us, of a second impression of Art. 10th in our last review, the following note relative to our statement of the number of episcopal parishes in the states of New-York and Maryland.

"There is much reason to believe that in regard to the numbers mentioned in this place, the reviewer is under a mistake. From a list published the present year, it appears that in the diocese of New-York, there are only sixty six preachers, several of whom are missionaries, and in that of Maryland, the number is forty-eight."

The list here referred to, we had before us, but as it was a list of *ministers*, and we were speaking of *parishes*, we did not consider it as furnishing the information we wanted. We took pains to be accurate, and wrote to the southward to obtain the statement which we gave In the last number of the *Churchman's Magazine*, we find it corroborated as to the diocese of New-York, which is stated to consist of "the bishop, fifty-six presbyters, fifteen deacons, and *one hundred and eighteen* organized congregations." We have no reason to doubt that we were equally correct, as to Maryland. The thing is of no consequence, but we would not seem to make statements at a venture.

A translation of the second letter of Herder on the study of Divinity, was prepared for this number, and also a review of the posthumous pamphlet of Dr. Watts; but excluded by the press of other matter. They will appear in our next.

END OF NO. 5.—VOL. II.

THE

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

NEW SERIES—No. 12.

For November and December, 1820.

HERDER'S LETTERS RELATING TO THE STUDY OF DIVINITY.

[Translated from the German.]

LETTER II.

The Hebrew is to be spoken of and used, as the language of a peculiar time and people. The merit of Schultens. We must not judge the poetry of the Bible, by the present standard of taste. An examination of the history of Paradise, of the first transgression, and of the story of Balaam.

That the Hebrew language was spoken by men,—that is, by a nation,—has been fully demonstrated: but that it was spoken by Gods, by Angels, and Elohim, cannot be proved. I stand therefore by the first.

And here it does not concern me, whether Adam, Seth, Noah, or Abraham at Ur in Chaldæa, spoke Hebrew; enough that their posterity spoke it, Moses wrote it, and the oldest writings of the Old Testament, and nearly its whole contents, are preserved in this once living, human dialect. Now what is more natural, than that men should use it as a living national language? and when it ceased to be so, that they should have recourse to the languages, which represent it most to the life? You will not therefore fail to study with diligence the Arabic, and the kindred dialects:—Not, indeed, to gather roots which you may force into the Hebrew; nor to make easy passages difficult, and natural things unnatural, by dint of Arabic conjugation; nor, above all, to beg beauties of stone out of Arabia, to kill living beauties with. Let it be your chief object to make yourself master of the ge-

nius of the language ; to feel the expression and imagery of the East ; and to hear in its living tones, at least from a distance, the old and simple Hebrew, by the help of its younger and more artificial dialects.

It can hardly be expressed, how much good has been effected by the plain consideration—it is a living, human, national tongue, that we are learning. Schultens overturned the prejudice, that the Hebrew language was the language of heaven ; and recommended her younger sister or daughter upon the earth. Since then, the study of that, for the illustration of the bible, has received an entirely new impulse. Endeavour to have always at hand, for reference, his works ; particularly his " Origines Hebræœ." Their Latin style is like that of a learned Arabian, too fine, too artificial ; and they abound too much with unimportant disquisitions connected with etymology ; yet the spirit of his writings is full of the knowledge and philosophy of the oriental languages. This author has tasted the kernel, and not kept gnawing upon the shell ; while we in Germany often get nothing from his disparagers or followers, but shells polished a little. Observe it as a general rule in every art and science, to pay chief attention to him who first led the way in it,—to the source : now for the most part he rises as the fountain, and the rest are but babbling brooks. Notwithstanding his unlucky assiduity here and there, which it is hard to follow him through with, he is a gold mine to any body, who is willing to dig for the general history of the earliest languages.

Enough that we read the Old Testament in the ancient, simple, pastoral, unphilosophical, *unabstract* language of the Hebrews. From this point of view, which bears closely upon the spirit of what it contains, let none divert you. If you would enjoy these writings in their original air, you must become a shepherd with shepherds, a peasant with an agricultural people, an oriental with the primitive inhabitants of the East. Be particularly on your guard against the dull abstractions of modern monkery ; and still more against those pretended beauties, which would be obtruded and forced upon these sacred specimens of the highest antiquity, from our own state of society. Of that taste for abstractions I shall speak by and by. At present we live in the especial age of elegance and flowers, with which even Moses, David and Solomon must be bestrown, in spite of all their protestations. This psalm is an ode, that an elegy after the newest fashion : Moses and the prophets become epic bards ; and the subject is often treated, as if these holy men had composed their pieces according to the elements of Batteux, or in the form of an anthology. A withered florilegium from the Greeks and Ro-

mans is scattered over them; and the author, when he has moreover prattled sufficiently of various readings and versions, is sure of the paper crown of gazette commendation. I am no enemy of fine passages and parallel beauties, whenever and however they are found: but a noble original, especially one whose simplicity and important truth are its best ornaments, loses more than it gains, when attempted to be illustrated by the painted, and often irrelevant copies, of later times and artificial manners; and in this way there is an end at once (the subject of divinity out of the question) of the most beautiful originalities of the Bible. David and Job little thought that they must be made the colleagues of Horace and Æschylus, in order to be proved the first to see and feel what those poets described. I doubt, however, if they, who cannot be interested in them for their own sake, will be moved by all the tinsel and electric flashes, with which they can be made to sparkle. Lowth "de sacra poësi Hebræorum" has done much towards extending this poetic air:* but he must certainly be acquitted from any participation in the latest abuses on this subject, by which things the most substantial and nutritive have come to be dissolved into mere fragrant vapour. He gave Prælections after the English fashion; and, wishing to take up his subject ab ovo, treated it after the manner of Greece and Rome. He chose Greek and Roman names, and was fond of the method of the modern poetics, though not always adapted to his antique, oriental, sacred originals. Hence the questions and points often so impertinent,—whether the book of Job is a real drama? whether the song of Solomon is a true Theocritean pastoral? and to what class of odes or songs this psalm or that prophecy belongs? They have absolutely nothing to do with any of these classes and distinctions: not only because none of those classes and distinctions were at that time in existence; but because no one of the biblical writers, in the sense of the Greeks and Romans at least, set up for a poet. Their poetry was not art, but nature; the spontaneous flow of expression; the earnestness of intention, of strong impulse. Every one of their finest strokes

* Lest any of our readers should fear that Herder does not think respectfully enough of so distinguished a critic as Lowth; and that they may not have to wait till the third letter comes to relieve them of such an error; we translate the first sentence of his remarks preliminary to his celebrated work "on the spirit of the Hebrew poetry."—"Every body is acquainted with Bishop Lowth's beautiful and inestimable book *de sacrâ poesi Hebræorum:* it will be readily seen, however, on recurring to that work, that this is neither a translation, nor an imitation of it;—and to be with him or behind him could not prove unpleasant or unprofitable to the lovers of the oldest, simplest, and loftiest poetry; nor to any who love to trace the march of divine and human knowledge among our race."

is individual ; and by such a classification, made in other times by other people, must lose more than it can possibly gain :—the living image that it presents, is darkened behind a cloud of arbitrary taste.

Let us now pass to examples ; for these always give the most definite instructions. The history of Paradise and the first transgression, for instance, can be nothing but an allegorical song, a moral fable. The garden, the tree of knowledge, the serpent, had no real existence : they were only used as the means of conveying to mankind, under the veil of a fable, a beautiful lesson ;—how sin arises. and how it is punished by God ;—and, naturally enough, the veil too was made beautiful. Thus a man gives to the text, considered as a matter of taste and poetry, what he takes away from it, and from the account connected with it, as an historical narrative.*—Now I ask you, my young friend, if to your uncrazed youthful judgment, on the first impression, any such song, any such beautifully designed and beautifully finished fable, appears in this simple narration. I read, and read again : no tone of song comes to my ears ; no more than in the whole history of the Israelites or the patriarchs ; where indeed in the song of Lamech, the songs of Moses, of David, of the prophets, the language rises at once into so different a strain, that no one who has the least sensibility to poetry and song can mistake that higher sound. Where is it to be found here, in the beginning of the Bible ? where does the song begin ? where does it end ? where begins the fable ; and where does it end ? If there is no paradise, no tree, no serpent ; if these are but the creatures of fable ; why not then sin too ? why not Adam and Eve ? But upon these last, as historical personages, there is much depending as we go on ; and in the sequel many consequences are ascribed to the transgression, and the banishment from this original dwelling place. Is it a fable, then, that Adam was created ? that he was created thus and there, and for such a purpose ? that under such circumstances he was the father of the human race ? We know then nothing of all these things ; and we have nothing, in the whole account, but the old story of Prometheus and Pandora. Of course, all that is connected with this fiction is fiction too : and besides, the histories of Cain and Abel, of the flood, of the march of the Israelites out of Egypt, and through the wilderness, have interspersed with them such bold and poetical passages and descriptions, as can find no place in a tale told with such infant

* Our readers may, if they please, compare the literal account, which our author proceeds to defend, with " A glance at the history of opinions concerning the fall of man," published in the Disciple, New Series, vol. I. p. 170.

simplicity as this. In short, if all is a poem, a fable, a fiction, which has come to us from the infancy of the world, and come to us in its own appropriate tones, which must be simple, juvenile, poetical ;—for all historians admit, and the nature of things demands, that every composition must wear the natural colouring of the circumstances that produced it ;—what will be left to us of all this most ancient of histories ?

On the contrary, my friend, if you will take the history just as it is, not concerning yourself with any of the late ingenious interpretations or inventions, how natural and philosophical—and by that I mean, how agreeable to the subject, the language, the time, the circumstances,—does every thing become !* A human pair is formed ; for God does every thing with the least expenditure of power. A third man, or a second pair, would have been lavishness ; and we should all dwell on the earth as brethren of one family. Adam and Eve are thus historical persons ; and their creation, their mutual offices, the union of their earliest perceptions and feelings, could not be told more simply, truly, intelligibly, faithfully to fact, for the uncultivated listeners of ancient times, than they are told here.† Paradise comes naturally in : for must not this first human pair, which trod the earth under the immediate education of divinity, have a select, secure place assigned to them, fitted and furnished to be the first school of their knowledge and duties ? There is philosophy here : for all this was required according to the simplest plan of an élève of nature. Household could not derive its origin from agriculture : it must have begun in a garden, or it could not have begun at all. In an inhospitable climate, or under the teeth of wild beasts, could not unprotected man have been cast forth ; nor exposed a prey to all the elements ; for he would soon have perished. The creator of the earth now adopted man as his child and favourite. It was his pleasure that he should bear his image, and appear as his representative, by being endowed with understanding and speech, and invested with dominion over the animal creation. From the first moment of his life, therefore, he must cul-

* A whole dialogue in the first volume of the " Spirit of the Hebrew poetry," is devoted to the Mosaic account of Paradise ; in which the writer endeavours more at length to distinguish what is historical, and to explain what is figurative in it. We think, however, that he is at least as successful here ; and our readers will probably think that here is quite enough of it. An imperfect and very bald translation of the first volume of that work was published at London in 1801, under the title of " Oriental Dialogues."

† " O that this were a fable !" cries Alciphron, in the dialogue mentioned in the last note, " it would be beautiful as a fable." " In point of drapery," replies Eugenius, " always regard it as such : but it was a fable that was really acted."

tivate these precious and expansive gifts; cultivate them in the lightest and at the same time the most urgent manner:—see then how exact and natural is the whole history. God selects animals for his companions, who do not harm him, who become familiar with him, from whom he derives instruction, who by their instincts, their characteristic qualities, their noises and motions, gradually improve his reason, skill, and speech. He selects trees for his use, which are not hurtful, but refresh and nourish him; among which he finds the plainest labour, and the sweetest relaxation and reward. He furnishes him with a spouse, who opens his heart, and discloses to him a new world of mutual joys, and inspires a love, which,—as he had observed in the lower animals, and now experienced in himself,—transcends far every other love. At length God lays upon him the most infantile injunction that could possibly be;—that he should not meddle with a beautiful tree that grew in the midst of the garden, but choose rather another, which he recommended; a better and more salutary, but probably a less inviting one: he pronounces threatenings which Adam, perhaps, understood as little, as children understand threatenings that have never been inflicted: his obedience, his self-denial, the power of the invisible in his soul over the most seductive appearances of any forbidden thing which the earth could produce, was to be put to the proof, or, which is the same thing, called into exercise; and this was absolutely necessary for the physical and moral trial and security of the human race. Every thing cannot be permitted to a frail yet moral being: to a child every thing is not permitted. The power over ourselves to resist an enticing evil is the foundation of all human virtue,—which he certainly had occasion for in the more complicated circumstances of life;—and from the refraining of the senses, according to the commandment of the Father, begins the whole religion of love, gratitude, and reverence. I am utterly unable to imagine any test, which could have been so natural, so adapted to the infancy of man, as this. It was the very nature of things: for could the man, following the impulse of appetite and will, eat of poisonous fruits, and still live? and who should tell him this? who could so earnestly and forcibly tell it as his paternal instructor? A child, too, will always best become wise through the experience of evil; and the mother lets her darling fall on a soft place to teach it in the best manner what it is to fall: even so did the kind mother of mankind, and arranged with such a view every circumstance. A serpent was to be the tempter, who was probably seen eating of the fruit, and first suggested to the woman the great probability that she too might taste of it, without immediately incurring the penalty of death. As the first pair learned every thing by ob-

serving the animals, why should they not likewise have learned and imitated this? The serpent, thought they, is so wise above all the beasts of the field; and may he not be so here? very likely it derives from this plant its wisdom, as we from all the other trees derive life, health and vigour. It was therefore that the Creator called it by so wonderful a name: tree of Knowledge. Of Knowledge; and forbid it to us? Might it not be that He reserved it for himself? Might he not eat of it unseen, and thus possess the wisdom of the gods? Was it from jealousy that He forbade it? The wise serpent eats, and is well. It allures, it seduces them: down dropped the fair fruit of enchantment before their longing eyes: the woman ate, the man ate, and the consequence was what might be expected. We know not what kind of fruit this was: the effect of it is described once and again so historically, that we may suppose it produced by some unknown fruit of a distant clime. It awakens passions within them; they see that they are naked: the unusual, unpleasant emotion reminds them of the divine prohibition: they stand there ashamed, they know not whither to turn, they make themselves such slight garments as they are able. The father comes, his voice is heard,--perhaps, as usual at the close of the day, to receive the account of their occupations, and by that means instruct them:*—but they do not now advance to meet him; they fly, they hide themselves, they answer to their call, they exculpate themselves like ingenuous children who have not yet learned to lie. The father (whose paternal examination nothing can exceed in beautiful fidelity of description) performs what remained to be performed, and with reference to which he had permitted this early fall. He makes their transgression the entrance to another stage of condition, more hard indeed, but necessary: their punishment is not death, as to alarm them he had threatened; but a new, though a harsh benefit.† He at once indulgently ad-

* We leave it to who chooses, to reconcile this with what is said in the dialogue: "They heard the voice of Jehovah, who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day:—nothing is more probable than that this was thunder; and that through this very expression the image was introduced into the Hebrew poetry."

†"It was necessary," Herder writes in another place, "that the first man should have the door of his cottage opened; and it was to be opened by his own error."—Herder opposes with warmth the idea, that man was not originally made for the state in which he is at present placed: he calls it a hateful and contemptible philosophy, which puts out men's eyes that they may not see themselves." "Adam," he goes on, "sinned first; and we are all sinners as he was; and must die as he did: as Eve was deceived, so are we deceived and estranged from our simplicity;—this is what the scripture says, but it does not say that we are made differently from Adam in our bodily frame: it does not say that when he sinned his nature was ruined, or that he and his posterity through him were subjected to numberless perversions of understanding and will."

mits all that they say; considers the serpent as the tempter, according to their representation;—punishes it too, that nothing may seem to escape from retribution. It is detested and abhorred by all the beasts of the field; creeps upon its belly; eats the dust; a sworn foe of mankind, whose heel it bites at, since it can do them no further harm: it thus becomes a perpetual sign to our race, of malediction, scorn, abhorrence, wretchedness, treachery and mischief; and in very shape an ugly reptile, made to be crushed under foot. As such it crept now before the eyes of the man and woman: for they had been on their guard against it before the transgression, and this most noxious creature to the primæval dwellings of man was shown even bodily to be a crafty enemy, whom they should fly from. The woman now knew to whom to ascribe the pangs of childbirth, and the heaviest yoke upon womanhood—subjection: the man knew to whom he was indebted for the toilsome task of tilling the ground, and for the increased troubles of life. Then death is introduced so beautifully; not as death, of which Adam could as yet have no idea, but as becoming earth again, out of which (still historical) he had been taken; a returning to his original; a going to rest after a hot day. The man is thus acquainted with the whole circle of his new life; and is armed for it by kind necessity, as for a softened punishment, which his own fault had incurred. The gracious Father prepares him for it still further; and fits him out, if I may say so, by furnishing the very necessary contrivance of garments more convenient than his fig-leaves. He thus, now that the serpent is his enemy, and death is in the world, acquires at once over the brutes, a power and dexterity, which were as necessary to his new abode and occupation as to his clothing, which must be made of their skins. He leaves, actually and historically, his beloved garden, the first nursery of his young attainments, duties, and dispositions. It was already to them a lovely dream of youth: and look! the cherub is watching before its gate with a flaming sword, to guard the way to the tree of life; the loss of which was their greatest and most mournful loss;—a loss, of which every malady of their offspring, every debility of their own, often enough reminded them. They saw Paradise now in the distance; probably behind a hill, on which thunder clouds were resting: there is no way of return; in every flash it is the flame of the heavenly guard that is darting there.

How natural every thing; how true, how striking! And tell me, my friend, does it not all depend on this,—that at every stroke we should carry in our minds the idea of a childhood's history of the human race? Every thing there cries, truth! truth! The human race was and must have been so brought up, so tried, so

led forward : it was only thus that it could advance on its rude way by the most natural and instructive means. A master description is this of its education, in the first intricate steps of it; and a masterpiece of narration, in the appropriate colouring of circumstance and time, is this narration. Stroke by stroke it can be compared with the history of nations, of men, in their infancy; and as individual nations and men have begun in their formation, so also did the human race begin. Situation and dwelling place, the first language and means of sustenance, intercourse, the learning from the brutes, the fancied conversation with them, sin and shame, the prohibition and the punishment, and all that is connected with these, and goes along with them,—are the most delightful juvenile tale, of the first and most difficult developing of our race :—it precedes the patriarchal history, entirely in the same tone, and in the full colouring of its peculiar model, and with the truest moral painting of the characters that appear in it. As a cunningly devised apologue, the thing loses all its point and scope ; it has neither object nor appropriateness more.—It was hardly written for us of the eighteenth century. We must take the pains to go back to its connexion, to the childhood of our race ; and not expect these to come naturally to us.

My first example has been unreasonably long : but I cannot, for all that, refrain from giving you a second ; which shall be no other than the history of Balaam and his Ass.* In the midst of mere history it stands ; that is without dispute : but people have been so ashamed of it as history, that they have been inclined to make of it sometimes a dream ; and sometimes a fable in the taste of Homer's speaking horses ; and even (and I name the author of this opinion with the highest respect in every thing else)†

* Numbers xxii. 22-35.

† The author refers to Jerusalem, ("venerabilis senex," as Schultz styles him,) who first defended this theory, and has been followed in it by Rosenmüller, Doederlein, and many others. His supposition, stated more at large, is this : that Balaam was cunning enough to see that Moab would be worsted in opposing Israel ; and that, therefore, to save his credit, he pretended to hold these communications with God :—Moses took the account from Moabitish memoirs as he found it Dr. Geddes, no more than Herder, can see how this hypothesis solves all difficulties. "To me," he says, "there appears nothing strange in the story of the ass, but the manner of telling it ; and that ceases to be wonderful, when we remember the eastern mode of narrating. Balaam is riding on his ass, on as yet a doubtful errand ; the ass startles at something and turns aside from the way ; thrusts her master's leg against a wall, and at length falls down under him. All this he takes for a bad omen, and a sign that his journey is not agreeable to God : God is thence conceived to be angry with him, and an imaginary dialogue ensues between God and Balaam, as had before been supposed to be held between Balaam and his ass. I believe there are few gentlemen who have not held such dialogues with their horses." Vater (a short account of

a lie of Balaam's, which Moses found among the Moabites, and inserted as such into his narrative. Read, my friend, the history in its connexion, and decide whether either of these hypotheses, evidently of modern origin, and savouring of modern taste, can satisfy you. Of a dream here is not a syllable ; the fable of the horses of Achilles who spoke, is nothing to the purpose; for here is no heroic poem, as with Homer; and we are not prepared for any thing of the kind. Still less did Moses introduce the account as a piece of imposture : for every thing sounds as true in the tone of the account, as in the history of the departure out of Egypt, or in the description of the mount of wonders. In fact Moses recounts it for the glory of Israel, and for the confirmation of its courage and its trust in Jehovah. Even a prophet, who was the hireling of its enemies, must, through an invincible divine impulse, pronounce a blessing, against his interest and against his will :—more than once, in the presence of the king, at the hazard of his life,—to say nothing of the loss of honours and treasures—pronounce a blessing, and praise the God Jehovah :—evidently this is the spirit of history, and here is the reason why it was related. You are well aware, my friend, how much account the ancient world made of blessing and cursing, of divination, with prophetic feelings, words and signs ; and how much is still made of them among uncultivated nations. None of our kings would send for a Balaam ; but that Balak sent, that he besought him so respectfully, and with more and more earnestness for his curse, that he had so much confidence in his appalling blessing, and yet did not put forth his hand against him, shows satisfactorily in what reverence the prophet and his work were held among the Moabites. Moses forbade his people magic and incantation ; but he forbade it not as cold, bald imposture, but as the service of strange gods ; as an application of forbidden and evil powers, over which Jehovah had supremacy, and by which he was profaned. Exactly in this point of view does he relate this account. Balaam is invited to curse ; but the God of Israel prevents his curses by a stern

whose celebrated work may be found in the Monthly Anthology, vol. 9. p. 56, copies thus much of the Doctor's note into his "Commentary on the Pentateuch," and observes of it :—it does not follow that the old eastern writer conceived of the matter so, nor that nothing else was at the bottom of the account ; especially when the connecting circumstances, which must be resolved into metaphorical liberties, are so many, and so plainly told.—He himself thinks it very probable, that even in Israelitish antiquity different ideas prevailed of the tradition about Balaam ; and that there are traces of such a difference in the book of Numbers itself. But how this tradition arose, on what facts it grounded itself, and how it assumed its present form, he contends that we can only conjecture.

nightly forbiddance. The soothsayer, seized with the fear of God, refuses to go. More noble messengers and more splendid presents arrive, to prevail on him to consent: his heart is all readiness,—but the prohibition still lies upon him, and he declares that he can do nothing to break that bond. Jehovah sees his covetous wishes, and requires of him to make it appear before the king and the people of Moab, that no word of cursing could fall from the lips even of the most avaricious of hired prophets, contrary to the command of God: thus he permits the journey, and they depart. The heart of the prophet now began to change; for it was not certainly to bring Balak a curse that he had set out, and his journey was inconsistent and dangerous if he could really think of such a thing: he thought, therefore to elude and baffle the divine command, and take occasion to fulfil the expectation of Balak by throwing out some evil expression, to which the people of that day ascribed great efficacy. Then God was angry with him as he rode; his angel met him in the way, to warn him, who disregarded the divine voice in dreams, still more sternly. The dumb, serviceable beast sees the vision, and refuses to go on: this alone,—according to the vulgar sentiment of the time, and especially after what had happened, and to the mind of a diviner,—must have seemed an unlucky omen; the kingdom of the spirit, was against him, the God Jehovah, who in two dreams had appeared to him. He disregards the omen, beats the animal, and urges her further. The vision leads on to a narrower path, and he is pressed to the wall; but he regards it not, and beats and urges again. Now comes he to a close place, where there is no outlet: the messenger of the Lord appears in its most formidable aspect; the ass drops down: he is enraged, he storms, and now—she speaks. She actually does speak in the impostor's ears; for this is told in the same tone, in which all the rest is told: in the same manner, in which it is afterwards said that God opened the eyes Balaam, it is said here that he opened the mouth of the ass.* The eyes of the prophet in his wild and angry mood were not yet lifted up, as is plainly signified; and Jehovah there opens his eyes. He sees the messenger of God with the fearful drawn sword, who reproves him, who speaks of

* In the second volume of the "Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry," Herder speaks thus of the same *history*:—'a fearful phenomenon is to befall him in the way: he actually hears and sees *in a waking vision* what is here related. How trifling, therefore, are the questions, whether the ass really spoke, and how she spoke, and in what way reason and speech were given her! She spoke to the false prophet *in vision*; that is, he heard a voice, and saw an appearance.'—We do not know whether our readers will regard this as a very clear description.

slaying him, who pronounces his way perverse,—that is, treacherous, false, audacious,—and once more bids him in the most awful manner say nothing, but what the immediate divine impulse (ορμη εκστασις, impetus Jehovæ) would have him say. Thus warned he proceeds, and in spite of his covetousness can do no otherwise. All his altars, all his offerings on the high places, are of no avail: no god of the hills here helps him: Jehovah meets him, and he cannot curse, he must bless. Twice he does it unwillingly; but the third time, as he feels the divine influence, he readily yields to it, and even adds a fourth blessing, higher than all the rest,—he blesses even to the latest times. No one, who has read what he uttered, can mistake the sublimest enthusiasm, the highest and as if immediate inspiration, of which human language is capable; and it resounds and springs upward from the unwilling lips of one, who was bought, and bought anew, to curse, when he blessed. It resounds from the lips of a man, who would deceive God, whose design was perverse when he came thither, who forgot the visions of the night, and gave no heed to all the portents of the way. A double vision of wonders was necessary to terrify him: and this vision was, as it were, his own history. As God opened the mouth of the dumb beast, so must *he* too speak against his will and his welfare; as if the angel with the naked sword at the narrow part of the way was standing continually before him. Whoever will carry himself back into the belief of those remote ages, and especially as it existed in the mind of one of the oriental diviners, who were always full of dreams, full of visions, full of wanderings in other places and times,—and are so still among all the nations where they are found;—whoever will do this, will find every thing so in its proper place, and the whole history in such natural order, the dealing of God so adapted to Balaam's manner of thinking, and even the speech of the animal in the ear of the soothsayer so agreeable to the object of his oracular journey, that I should know how to alter no word in this whole relation, even on the score of natural expression, any more than I should in the noble oracles of Balaam's mouth. It was as the proudest garland of the Israelitish confidence of victory, that Moses inserted it;—a garland, which an idolater and a knavish prophet for hire, under the immediate compulsion of Jehovah, even like a speaking brute, was obliged to offer. Can you conceive of a manner, in which Israel could be more beautifully or emphatically blessed? If you reduce the thing, however, to a fable, or a tale of imposture, I grant that this complexion of it will be better suited to the spirit of our times, and may satisfy it pretty well: but the history is broken. Moses' aim and scope are

destroyed, and the most resistless inspiration is become a poor trick; against the genius of the age, the popular belief, and the very words of Moses himself.—I should never have done, were I to attempt to go through with all the false colours, which have been laid on the good old Hebrews, borrowed from modern times, and especially from the poets: indeed my letter has grown into an essay already.

ON THE USE OF THE WORD "MYSTERY."

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

To use words in a wrong meaning, or without any meaning, is an old offence. It is a cause of great complaint, that language, which is designed to be the vehicle of ideas, should in so many cases degenerate into mere sound, or become the instrument of deception. This is, perhaps, peculiarly true of certain words and phrases derived from scripture, especially such words and expressions, as have been particularly connected with theological systems, or have become, in any degree, technical. Every one knows in how vague a manner, and how much at random, scripture terms are quoted and applied; and perhaps the language of the Bible, from the very nature of the book, is more liable to this abuse, than any other language. There is no book which requires so much explanation to make its true sense understood in many places, and which at the same time is so much in common use. Hence arises, in a considerable degree, that indefinite and obscure use of scripture phraseology, which is so general. Almost every one reads the bible; but few are possessed of the means of understanding its various parts, and fewer still will apply the means with impartiality and a desire to find the truth. The consequence is, that many words and phrases from the sacred writings are used in a very unmeaning or very incorrect manner. Besides, we are very apt to be pleased with being able merely to quote the bible, and to think it no mean proof of our proficiency in religion, that we can on every occasion promptly repeat some passage of scripture. To most minds there is something so satisfying in the mere use of scripture language, that it is a matter of little consequence, whether any definite ideas are attached to it, or not; hence, words come to take the place of things, and hence we so often hear or find not only grossly incorrect, but sometimes even ludicrous, applications of verses and sentences from the sacred writings.

Perhaps there is no word, of which the use is more frequently indefinite or incorrect, than the word "*mystery*." It is often made to hide the want of meaning, or to shield from examination ideas which are totally inconsistent with each other. It serves to put an end to discussion, when men have nothing else to say, and when nothing else can be said. It is a convenient resort alike for those, who do not think clearly, and for those, who are unwilling to relinquish their opinions to the force of any objection. Whatever things are unintelligible, absurd, or contradictory, may, by the aid of this single word, be secured from inquiry, and be converted into essential articles of christian faith. If, for instance, we ask, how God can be strictly and properly one being, and yet consist of three persons, "the same in substance, equal in power and glory," each infinite, and each possessing supreme divinity,—the answer is ready,—it is a *mystery*. If we ask, how one of these persons, Jesus Christ, could be at once "God and man in two distinct natures, and one person forever," could at one and the same moment know all things, and not know all things,—be suffering on the cross, and reigning in heaven,—the only reply is, that it is a *mystery*.—We are told, that this being, who was both God and man, suffered to make an atonement for sin, and that this infinite expiation was rendered necessary by the infinite evil of sin:—if then we enquire, how God could both offer up the sacrifice and receive it, how the divine nature could suffer, and how, if it did not, the death of Christ could be an infinite atonement, or any thing else than the death of a man,—our questions are easily met by saying that the whole is a *mystery*.—If we are confounded at the doctrine of man's inability to do the will of God, at the same time that he is required to do it, and venture to ask, how that Being, who is represented as invested with the attribute of justice and with the true character of a father, could bring mankind into the world "under his wrath and curse," and then condemn them to endless misery for not doing that, which He had rendered it impossible for them to do,—the same answer is still at hand,—it is the *mysterious* dealing of God with his creatures.—To the reflecting mind it may seem a most revolting inconsistency, to suppose that God, who "is no respecter of persons," who "is good unto all and whose tender mercies are over all his works," should "out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elect some to everlasting life," and send the rest to irrecoverable ruin and eternal punishment;—but to silence all objections and quell every feeling of moral sensibility, we are taught that this is too *mysterious* for man to understand, and that God hath a right to do what he will with his own.—In short, it would be an almost

endless task to follow the various abuses of this word on religious subjects. To many it brings with it the recommendation of silencing the inquiries of reason, and humbling the pride of the depraved heart; and with many doubtless it is the sincere expression of heartfelt reverence and pious awe. Those, who quote the language of scripture in the loose and indistinct manner mentioned above, will probably feel satisfied with using the term in their own way, merely because they find it in the bible; and not attending to the sense, in which it is used in different places of the sacred writings, will claim for their own application of it the sanction of divine authority. It may be profitable, therefore, briefly to remark upon all the passages, in which the word *mystery* occurs in the New Testament,—that we may see whether we can there find any authority for those uses of it, which are so common and so incorrect.

Matth. xiii. 11.—"Because it is given unto you to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven." This was said by Christ, immediately after he had delivered the parable of the sower, in reply to the question, "why speakest thou unto them in parables?" The "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," in this place, are evidently not any incomprehensible doctrines of religion, but those obscure and figurative expressions, which Christ had just used, respecting the nature of his kingdom and the reception and fate of christianity.—These our Lord tells his disciples they were in a condition to understand, while to others they would appear dark and unintelligible. The same explanation must of course be applied to Mark iv, 11, and Luke viii, 10.

Romans xi, 25.—"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this *mystery*," &c. Here the word "mystery" has a meaning, which it often bears, viz. *something which had not before been made known or revealed, but which is now made known*, and in this place, it refers, as the succeeding passages shew, to the future conversion of the Jews to christianity.

Romans xvi, 25.—"According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest," &c.—In this passage, the same general meaning of the word, as occurs in the last citation, is expressed by the apostle; it is *what was kept secret, but is now made manifest.* There is a difference of opinion concerning the particular thing which St. Paul here means by "mystery." Some, with Locke, think it is the calling of the Gentiles, while others suppose it to be the christian religion, which before the coming of Christ was not known; except what might be gathered from the general and obscure expressions in the prophetical writings, and these

were but very imperfectly understood. The same interpretations must be used in explaining Ephesians i, 9. iii, 3, 4, and 9. vi, 19,—Colossians i, 26 and 27. ii, 2. iv, 3. and 1 Timothy iii, 9.—In each of these passages, "mystery" will be found to mean either the system of christianity in general, or the particular doctrine of the application of the benefits of the gospel indiscriminately to the Jews and Gentiles, which is termed "the calling of the Gentiles," was frequently spoken of by Paul, and was peculiarly offensive to the Jews;—and these were called *mysteries*, because they had been long concealed and unknown, though they were now brought to light by divine revelation. With reference to the same meaning our Saviour (Matth. xiii, 35) quotes the words of the prophet, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter *things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*"

1 Corinthians, ii, 7.—"But we speak the wisdom of God in a *mystery*," &c.: that is, as Schleusner says, we teach the doctrine of divine truth, full of wisdom, *which had hitherto been unknown to men.* Here the same general sense occurs, as above. So, too, 1 Corinthians iv, 1, "stewards of the *mysteries* of God," means those who were employed in teaching the truths and doctrines of the Christian religion, *which would not have been known, had not God revealed them.*

1 Corinthians, xiii, 2.—"And though I understand all *mysteries.*" This expression may either signify to understand things, which are generally considered as obscure and profound, or, according to Rosenmüller, "to understand what cannot be understood except by divine revelation,"—or we may interpret it as relating to things written in the Old Testament, with Locke, who remarks on this passage,—"any predictions relating to our Saviour, or his doctrine, or the times of the gospel, contained in the Old Testament in types, or figurative and obscure expressions, not understood before his coming, and being revealed to the world, St. Paul calls 'mystery,' as may be seen all through his writings."

1 Corinthians xiv, 2.—St. Paul here mentions those, who had what was called *the gift of tongues.* "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue," says he, "speaketh not unto men, but unto God;" that is, God alone understands him; "howbeit," he continues, "in the spirit he speaketh *mysteries*," that is, he speaks what those who hear him *do not understand*, not because the subject of which he treats is *unintelligible*, but because they do not understand *the language in which he delivers his discourse.*

1 Corinthians, xv, 51.—"Behold I shew you a mystery," &c. that is, according to the use of the word already so often men-

tioned, "I teach or declare unto you what has been hitherto unknown, or very partially and obscurely known." What St. Paul here refers to, as is plain from the context, is the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, which is called a *mystery*, not on account of its being *incomprehensible*, but because it had lain obscured in concealment, till it was fully brought to light by the Gospel.

Ephesians v. 32. "This is a great *mystery*, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." The word is here used to express *that which has a mystical or allegorical sense, or is to be explained by an allegorical interpretation.* St. Paul had just spoken of the duty of affection in the husband towards the wife in the conjugal relation. He then (v. 31) cites a passage on this subject from Genesis ii. 24. and when he immediately adds, "this is a great *mystery*," &c. it is the same as if he had said, "this is capable of being applied in a remarkable allegorical sense with reference to Christ and his church;" that is, Christ has the same love for his church, or his true followers, that the husband should have for his wife. St. Paul, as Rosenmüller remarks, "in this and similar passages has imitated *the mystical mode of interpretation* common among the Jews, by which when some person, history, or rite is mentioned, another thing is compared with and illustrated by it."

2 Thessalonians ii. 7. "For the *mystery* of iniquity doth already work;"—that is, *concealed, secret* iniquity. The apostle had just spoken of "the man of sin." Who, or what, is meant by this expression is a question, which has long agitated and divided commentators: but it is of no importance to our present purpose. St. Paul evidently alludes to some person or principles, whose nature and influence would be malignant and dangerous, but whose open appearance was for a time prevented. Still it was already working in secret; and therefore he calls it the *mystery of iniquity*, that is, iniquity operating in darkness and concealment.

1 Timothy, iii. 16. "And without controversy great is the *mystery* of godliness," &c. Here, whatever reading we may prefer, or whatever interpretation we may give of the rest of the verse, it is evident that the word *mystery*,—the only point with which we are now concerned,—cannot mean any thing *inexplicable or incomprehensible*, because the things, which the apostle mentions as making up this mystery, were *facts* familiarly known to all who knew of christianity,—the appearance of the power and agency of God in Jesus Christ, &c. "Mystery" undoubtedly has in this place the signification so often referred to, viz. *what was not known till it was revealed.* The word translated

"godliness" is one frequently used in speaking of Christianity at large; thus "the mystery of godliness" signifies those truths and facts relating to christianity, which were unknown till the time of divine revelation. If those, who think they find in this verse the doctrine of the deity of Christ, are willing to grant that this doctrine is *mysterious*, only because it was never known till christianity, as they say, brought it to light, there cannot, it should seem, be any particular objection to the use of the word in that sense.

Revelation i. 20. "The mystery of the seven stars:" that is, *that of which the seven stars are the symbol*, that which is hidden under this emblematical representation.

Revelation x. 7. "The mystery of God should be finished;" that is, the *secret* or *concealed*, not the *unintelligible*, purpose of God should be accomplished. What this purpose was is matter of dispute.

Revelation xvii. 5. "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery," &c. In the use of this name, the allusion is probably to the symbolical and enigmatical nature of the representation here introduced,—there being a hidden sense under it. So likewise in the 7th verse of this chapter, "I will tell thee the *mystery* of the woman," that is, I will tell thee that of which the woman is the emblem or figurative representation.

It appears, then, after an examination of all the passages in the New Testament, in which the word "Mystery" occurs, that it is no where used in such a sense, as to justify those incorrect applications of it, which are so common in theological writings and in conversation. The sacred writers never attach to it any such signification, as will require us to renounce the exercise of our reason, to prostrate our understandings, and hold ourselves in readiness to receive whatever comes to us under the shelter of its name,—however absurd, however irreconcileable in different parts with itself. Yet in such a sense the word has been abundantly used by those, who in the support of human inventions in religion have met objections, which they could not answer, and encountered difficulties, which they could not otherwise surmount.

It might be interesting to trace the history of the abuse of this word. One of the original sources of corruption on this, as well as on many other religious subjects, was the desire, so common in the early ages, to give a false character of dignity and an imposing appearance to christianity, in order to recommend it to those, to whom it was addressed. "The profound respect," says Mosheim,* "that was paid to the Greek and Ro-

* Vol. 1, p. 199

man *mysteries*, and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them, was a further circumstance, that induced christians to give their religion *a mystic air*, in order to put it upon an equal foot in point of dignity with that of the pagans. For this purpose they gave the name of *mysteries* to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the holy sacrament with that solemn title." Thus probably the abuse of this word was confirmed, if not introduced; and even this might be justified by the singular argument of Tillotson, who assigns as one of the reasons, why, as he says, "God was pleased to appear in our nature," that, as "the world was much given to admire mysteries," they might thus have a mystery worthy of their admiration.* We know indeed, that the passion for what is strange, wonderful, and confounding, has always been prevalent among mankind, and that this passion has had a most extravagant indulgence in the different religions of the world, because the nature of the subject affords a wide range for the license of conjecture and speculation. But are we prepared to believe that the Christian dispensation was on set purpose adapted to employ and gratify this propensity?

The *most prevalent* Scripture sense of "mystery," as we have seen, is *something which mankind had not known, or which the light of reason alone could not discover, but which was revealed;* and never does it mean any thing in its nature unintelligible, much less any thing, which reason sees to be self contradictory and at war with the first principles of knowledge. The word, like all other words, has its proper uses. We often say a thing is *mysterious*, because we do not understand it; but there is a difference between what we do not understand and what cannot be understood. It is very common to remark, that the ways of God are a mystery to us, because we cannot look on them as a whole with one unbroken view, because we do not see all their bearings, are not apprised of the purposes they are designed to answer, and cannot open the long track of consequences to which they may lead; but can we feel satisfied in believing, merely on the strength of this word, doctrines which are derogatory to the character of the Deity, and hostile to what reason and Scripture teach us of the nature of his purposes and government? Are we not sometimes required by man thus to surrender the use of our faculties? Is not believing in what are called *mysteries* often the same thing as believing without ideas? Are not mysteries in religion too frequently the resource to which men are driven by the apprehension, that their doctrines will not bear the scrutiny of examination; and are they not thus kept, like the

* Sermon concerning the incarnation of Christ.

monarchs of the East, within the narrow precincts of retirement, lest what is adored, as the dictates of divinity, if exposed, might be discovered to be nothing but the dream of a mortal? And after all, those, who believe that Christianity has inexplicable mysteries, will do well to remember the words of Moses to the Israelites,—"*the secret things* belong unto the Lord our God; but those things *which are revealed* belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

W.

UNITARIAN EXPOSITOR.

No. V.

Of the texts which are thought to contain the application of the title God to Christ, the first we shall examine is the 28th verse of the 20th chap. of John. "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." This is one of the passages adduced by the orthodox to show, that, "the New Testament gives to Christ, the appellation of God, in such a manner, as that, according to the fair rules of interpretation, only the Supreme God can be meant."* We beg of our readers, to reflect for a moment on what they are here called upon to believe. Thomas, as a Jew, must have been well instructed in the nature of the divine being; he must have known that God was an infinite, eternal, invisible spirit. He was well assured too, that his master was a man; nobody, we take it, will doubt that; and he was suddenly brought from entire incredulity in the resurrection of him whom he knew to be a man, to acknowledge him as his God. And this sudden and violent conversion, this conviction that a man was God, was brought about by what means? By his having an opportunity to satisfy himself by his bodily senses of sight and touch, that it was in truth his master, who had a few days before been crucified, that now stood before him. Did he believe that the Supreme Being had suffered on the cross? Did he believe that he was in the immediate presence of his God? If he did, he was wonderfully composed on the occasion.—If Thomas in fact, applied the title to our Saviour, we must acknowledge that he used the word either in the highest, or in an inferior sense. If in the latter, no unitarian would object to the interpretation; if in the former, then it follows that Thomas, being satisfied that the person whom he addressed was indeed his master whom he had known to be crucified, believed

* Professor Stuart's Letters, p. 57. 2d edition.

in consequence, that this person was God; or in other words, his conviction that his master was the unchangeable God, was founded upon his conviction that he had died and risen again.—It may perhaps be contended that Thomas was not only instantly convinced that Jesus was God, but that, at the same moment, he obtained a clear insight into the doctrine of the two natures, and into those reasonings and distinctions by which it is proved, that the sufferings of the being who was God, were not the sufferings of God. To this we do not think it necessary to reply otherwise than by stating the fact, that the doctrine of the hypostatic union was not clearly understood, till it was definitively settled by the council of Ephesus, A. D. 431. We think this is sufficient to render it altogether improbable that Thomas was acquainted with this doctrine; and consequently, if he believed that Christ was God in the highest sense, the only sense which can avail the trinitarian, he must have believed that God, properly speaking, had died and risen again. It seems to us then necessary to conclude, from the nature of the case, either that the words of Thomas are an exclamation, or that the title God is applied to our Saviour in an inferior sense. It is of little consequence which solution is adopted; but we feel it of great importance to free an apostle from what we should consider so heavy a charge, as that of calling one who had been tempted, had suffered and *died*, the infinite Jehovah.

We will next turn to Hebrews, i. 8, 9. "But unto the Son, *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom; Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Of this passage we have already given an explanation; (Christian Disciple, vol. ii. p. 48.) but if any one is not satisfied with the interpretation there given, and still thinks the words are addressed to a being who is God in the highest sense, we must ask him if he thinks the Supreme God has *fellows;* if there is a God superior to the Supreme God. It is very clear that there is a being superior to him who is addressed in this passage; and however others may feel, we do not ourselves like to hold a contradiction in terms; we find it necessary to believe, that he, who has been exalted by his God 'above his fellows,' is not the Supreme Being.

These two are the only passages in the New Testament in which we conceive that it can be maintained, with any plausibility, that the title *God* is applied to Christ. Others indeed are adduced by trinitarians, but we think, and shall hereafter endeavour to show, that the application is incorrect. In the interpretation of these two, it would seem, that our opponents had for-

gotten the fact which we stated in our last, that in scripture language, the title, God, is not confined to Jehovah. They have insisted that because Jesus Christ is called God, he must be possessed of supreme divinity. We believe that they may be called Gods, "to whom the word of God came."

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

EXTRACT FROM MITFORD.

It has often been said, that if Christianity were only a divinely authorized system of morals, if it had only sanctioned the laws of virtue, by the fear of future punishment, and the hope of future happiness, it was unnecessary. The heathens, we are told, were good moralists, and it is not to be supposed that miracles would have been wrought, to confirm what reason was sufficient to teach. The following passage from that admirable historian, Mitford, satisfactorily illustrates the power of unassisted reason. He is speaking of the celebrated plague at Athens.

"The moral effects of this extraordinary visitation, reported by that judicious eye-witness to whom we owe this whole detail, deserve our notice. Wherever the doctrine of retribution in a life to come, for good and evil deeds in this world, has taken any hold on the minds of men, a general calamity strongly tends to check the passions, to inspire serious thought, to direct attention toward that future existence, and to make both hope and fear converge to the great Author of nature, the all-powerful, all-wise, and all-just God, who can recompense the sufferings of the good with endless blessings, and convert to lasting misery any short-lived joys that can arise from the perpetration of evil. But in Athens, where the Deity was looked to very generally and very anxiously for the dispensation of temporal good and evil only, it was otherwise. The fear of the divine power, says Thucydides, ceased; for it was observed, that to worship or not to worship the gods, to obey or not to obey those laws of morality which have always been held most sacred among men, availed nothing. All died alike; or, if there was a difference, the virtuous, the charitable, the generous, exposing themselves beyond others, were the first and the surest to suffer. An inordinate, and before unknown, licentiousness of manners followed. Let us enjoy ourselves, let us, if possible, drown thought in pleasure

to-day, for to-morrow we die, was the prevailing maxim. No crime, therefore, that could give the means of any enjoyment, was scrupled; for such were the ravages of the disease, that for perpetrator, accuser, and judges, all to survive, so that an offender could be convicted in regular course of law, was supposed against all chance. The final consummation pending over equally the criminal and the innocent, by the decree of fate or of the gods, any punishment that human laws could decree, was little regarded. How most to enjoy life, while life remained, became the only consideration; and this relaxation, almost to a dissolution of all moral principle, is lamented by Thucydides as a lasting effect of the pestilence of Athens."

FULLER.

THE GOOD SCHOOLMASTER.

THERE is scarce any profession in the Commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly performed. The reasons whereof, I conceive to be these. First, young scholars make this calling their refuge; yea, perchance, before they have taken any degree in the university, commence school-masters in the country, as if nothing else were required to set up this profession, but onely a rod and a ferule. Secondly, others who are able, use it only as a passage to better preferment, to patch the rents in their present fortune till they can provide a new one, and betake themselves to some more gainful calling. Thirdly, they are disheartened from doing their best with the miserable reward, which in some places they receive, being masters to the children, and slaves to their parents. But see how well our schoolmaster behaves himself.

He studieth his scholars' natures as carefully as they their books, and ranks their dispositions into several forms. And though it may seem difficult for him in a great school to descend to all particulars, yet experienced schoolmasters may quickly make a grammar of boys' natures, and reduce them all (saving some few exceptions) to these general rules.

1. Those that are ingenious and industrious. The conjunction of two such planets in a youth presages much good unto him. To such a lad a frown may be a whipping, and a whipping a death; yea, where their master whips them once, shame whips them all the week after. Such natures he useth with all gentlenesse.

2. Those that are ingenious and idle. These think with the hare in the fable, that running with snails (so they count the rest

of their schoolfellows) they shall come soon enough to the post; though sleeping a good while before their starting. Oh, a good rod would finely take them napping.

3. Those that be dull and diligent. Wines, the stronger they be, the more lees they have when they are new. Many boyes are muddy-headed till they be clarified with age, and such afterwards prove the best. Bristoll diamonds are both bright and squared and pointed by nature, and yet are soft and worthless; whereas Orient ones in India are rough and rugged naturally. Hard, rugged and dull natures of youth acquit themselves afterwards the JEWELLS of the country; and therefore their dulnesse is at first to be born with, if they be diligent. That schoolmaster deserves to be beaten himself, who beats nature in a boy for a fault.

4. Those that are invincibly dull and negligent also. Correction may reform the latter, not amend the former. All the whetting in the world can never set a razor's edge on that which hath no steel in it. Such boyes he consigneth over to other professions. Shipwrights and boatmakers will choose those crooked pieces of timber, which other carpenters refuse.

He is able, diligent, and methodical in his teaching, not leading them rather in a circle than forwards. He minces his precepts for children to swallow, hanging clogs on the nimblenesse of his own soul, that his scholars may go along with him. He is moderate in inflicting deserved correction. Many a schoolmaster better answereth the name of παιδοτριβης than παιδαγωγος, rather tearing his scholars' flesh with whipping, then giving them good education. No wonder if his scholars hate the Muses, being presented unto them in the shapes of fiends and furies. Junius complains de insolenti carnificina of his schoolmaster, by whom "conscindebatur flagris septies aut octies in dies singulos." Yea, heare the lamentable verses of poore Tussèr in his own life.

> From Paul's I went, to Eton sent,
> To learn straitways the Latine phrase,
> When fifty-three stripes given to me
> At once I had—
> For fault but small, or none at all,
> It came to passe, thus beat I was;
> See, Udal, see the mercy of thee
> To me poore lad.

Such an Orbilius marres more scholars then he makes: their tyranny hath caused many tongues to stammer, which spake plain by nature, and whose stuttering at first was nothing else but fears quavering on their speech at their master's presence. And whose mauling them about their heads hath dull'd those, who in quicknesse exceeded their master.

WILLIAM WALDRON,

Was the first minister of the New Brick Church in Boston, which was built in the year 1721. He was ordained there May 23, 1722, and died Sept. 11, 1727, at the age of 32 years. From the sermons delivered at his death and published by Dr. Cotton Mather, and four other ministers, it appears that he was regarded as a man of more than ordinary talents and goodness, and had given the promise of great eminence and usefulness.

We have lately had the perusal of some manuscript letters in his own hand-writing, a few extracts from which may be acceptable to some of our more curious readers. They are all written to his brother in Portsmouth, between September, 1723, and March, 1724.

"*Oct.* 9th, 1723.—* * * Dr. Cutter has displayed himself in the King's Chapel once and again; and though he has made a declaration that if there be not an harmony and good correspondence maintained between the ministry of the town and himself, it should be none of his fault; this he hath prefaced with a Sermon (shall I call it) full of raillery and bitter invectives. He insists, it seems, upon the invalidity of our ordination, and spares not to belch it, that we have no ministers but two or three that have been created by a *human creature*. You'll see the spirit of the man if you consult the second chapter of Ezekiel, for that was the chapter that he read when he preached, tho' for the getting of it he was forced to break in upon the known order of the Church of England."

In another letter he expresses himself thus: "As for me, the more I consider and weigh matters, the more it appears to me that we are ripening for ruin. We have forsaken the Lord that made us, and he now seems to be withdrawing from us. Yet, blessed be his name, there are some yet who stand in the gap, and do strongly and answerably maintain the way of these churches. Here are some sober remarks published upon a book called 'A modest proof of the order and government settled by Christ and his apostles in his church.' If you have seen neither, I will send them to you. The answerer is Master Wigglesworth; though it is a secret and must be concealed."

In the next letter we find something further: "Herewith I send you the pamphlets I mentioned in my last. Notwithstanding what I said of the author of the *Sober Remarks* you must not think them all made by the same hand. Where there is any bitterness shewn in them, where there are any ungentlemanly jeers, that excellent man utterly disclaims them; but the most ingenious and argumentative part of the book is his. But I really

intreat you not to mention it on any account; for he is greatly solicitous of having the matter remain a secret. He industriously conceals himself, and there are but three or four at most that do know any thing about it."

This Master Wigglesworth was the first professor of divinity in Harvard College. He is frequently mentioned in these letters, and in one of them his character appears at considerable length. "I must needs say, I cannot in justice imagine that this good gentleman is second to any. He is certainly a first rate, if not the first rate. His body is the less acceptable part of him; *that* is no wise to be despised. As to his intellectual powers, his being chosen into the professorship by some of our wisest and best men must speak him superlative. As for his publick preaching, you would guess him to be almost under an inspiration in it. His delivery is with great deliberation and distinctness. He has a small still voice, not loud, but audible. As for the impediment you mention, it is only a graceful lisp, that does not at all affect his speech to make him unintelligible. When I have heard him preach I have never observed but that every syllable was clearly articulated. And as for his never being a candidate for the gospel ministry, it is a mistake. He always was so, ever since he preached, and is so now. He has been in nomination (though I don't so well like the method) more than once, and the reason why he has been neglected is owing to the ignorance and unskilfulness of the rabble, who make the majority. They disgust every thing but noise and nonsense, and cannot be content to sit quiet, unless their auditory nerves are drummed upon with a voice like thunder. His meeting with no acceptance is a great reproach upon the understanding of the multitude. I guess he would hardly be prevailed to leave his business here only to make a fruitless journey, for I don't think he has any thing in prospect, I mean a settlement; and further, the learned this way would be loth to part with him. He is treated with great respect this way, and should he come to Portsmouth, your clergy, tho' his seniors, must stoop to him. As for his deafness I look on it as a good ministerial qualification. Mr. Prince is an excellent preacher. a fine scholar, but has an uncouth delivery; he is raw and uncultivated, not much of a gentleman. I should for my part pretty much suspect his conduct among you.—I asked the professor whether if he should be asked to preach any where for a small term, he could leave his business, and mentioned Piscataqua to him. He replied, that he would consult the president in such an affair. But, he added, I believe it will be best for them to hear only one. He is a very prudent man, and I am confident that if he had been sent to after the same manner that

Mr. Welsteed has, he would not have come; and yet he is a humble, meek, modest man."

It appears that considerable difficulty was found in settling a minister at Portsmouth. Our readers may not be displeased with the following paragraph on the subject. "You have ere this Mr. Gee's answer made public among you. I want to hear how you received it, and what your consequent proceedings are. The talk here is of Mr. Welsteed* for Portsmouth, and he is far superior to any that offers, unless the Professor could be obtained, which I believe is almost impracticable from some considerations. Let who will come, I fear Mr. *Smoothing Plain* will wheedle, ensnare, and * * * them. You will be so kind as to let me hear how you go on in these matters. 'Tis a pity that your pulpit is so much swayed by the petticoat. But some men are born to obey, while women rampant assume to rule and govern."

In another letter, speaking of several persons who were recommended as candidates for Portsmouth, a fact is stated respecting Mr. Prince, which will excite the astonishment of the candidates of the present generation. "As to Mr. Prince, he would not go, because he had no more than sixty sermons made, and he will go no where till he has doubled the number."

We might make several more extracts from these letters, which would afford glimpses at the history and manners of the times, political as well as religious; but the above must suffice.

LINES

WRITTEN ON VISITING THE BEAUTIFUL BURYING GROUND AT NEW-HAVEN.

O where are they, whose all that earth could giv
Beneath these senseless marbles disappeared?
Where even they, who taught these stones to grieve;
The hands that hew'd them, and the hearts that rear'd?
Such the poor bounds of all that's hoped or fear'd,
Within the griefs and smiles of this short day.
Here sunk the honour'd, vanish'd the endear'd:
This the last tribute love to love could pay,
An idle pageant pile, to graces pass'd away.

Why deck these sculptur'd trophies of the tomb?
Why, victims, garland thus the spoiler's fane?

* Mr. Welsteed, a few years after, became the successor of Mr. Waldron.

Hope ye by these to avert oblivion's doom ;
In grief ambitious, and in ashes vain ?
Go, rather bid the sand the trace retain,
Of all that parted virtue felt and did !—
Still powerless man revolts from ruin's reign ;
And pride has gleam'd upon the coffin-lid,
And rear'd o'er mouldering dust the mountain pyramid.

Sink, mean memorials of what cannot die !
Be lowly as the relics ye o'erspread !
Nor lift your funeral forms so gorgeously,
To tell who slumbers in each narrow bed.
I would not honour thus the sainted dead ;
Nor to each stranger's careless eye declare
My sacred griefs for joy and friendship fled.
O let me hide the names of those that were,
Deep in my stricken heart, and shrine them only there !

REVIEW.

ARTICLE XV.

The Life of Wesley, with the Rise and Progress of Methodism. By Robert Southey, Esq. 2 vols. 405. 436. New-York, 1820.

An able and impartial history of the rise and establishment of Methodism was a desideratum till the appearance of this valuable work ; which is interesting, not merely to the theologian, as narrating the progress of a new sect, but to the metaphysician and physiologist, as displaying new operations of the mind, new proofs and examples of the wonderful connexion and reciprocal influence of the mind and body. It is highly interesting to mark the growth, character, and effects of an enthusiasm which has extended so widely, and operated upon so many different individuals, to observe the power of opinion upon character, and the counteracting influence of character upon opinion ; to perceive what vast and lasting effects may be produced by the energy of one man, and from the mingled good and evil resulting from mis-directed zeal, to learn a lesson of discretion as well as fervour. All this Mr. Southey has shown himself well qualified to assist us in performing, as he has exhibited in the work before us great good sense, candour, and judgment. We think he is much more free from prejudice. than might be expected from one, who is officially pledged to support the cause of the church and king

of Great Britain ; and where he does not feel called upon to favour this, he writes, as one would anticipate, with much just feeling and fine talent. His materials were abundant, as the world has seldom seen men of more remarkable characters than the founders and early converts of Methodism, and many of the incidents of their lives strikingly exhibit the romantic quixotry of their minds. We cannot undertake to give even a brief abstract of all that is contained in these well filled volumes, but must content ourselves with exciting the curiosity of our readers by extracting some of the most remarkable facts and passages.

The subject of the memoirs was born at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, on the 17th of June, 1703, of highly respectable and worthy parents. His father was a clergyman of the church of England, who acquired, by writing a pamphlet in defence of the Revolution of 1688, and a poem upon the battle of Blenheim, that preferment which his talents and virtues as a clergyman could not gain for him. Religious impressions were early and deeply made upon the mind of his son John, by the care of an excellent mother, and by the imminent peril to which he was exposed, when only six years old, by the burning of his father's house. This was an incident not to be forgotten ; his deliverance strongly impressed his mother as well as himself ; and in reference to it, he had a house in flames engraved as an emblem under one of his portraits, with these words for a motto, " Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning ?" He received his school education at the Charter House, and at the age of seventeen was removed to Christ Church, Oxford. We must not omit to mention an incident, which took place in his father's family, whilst he was at school ; the story of which is similar to many other narratives which were very generally believed during the preceding century. Noises of various descriptions were heard in and about the house, such as groans, knockings, breaking of bottles, and clattering of pewter, which were attributed by all the family to some supernatural agency. We are very sorry that Mr. Southy has given this story the sanction of his belief. We had supposed that tricks enough of this sort had been played and detected, to furnish us with a satisfactory solution of any new story of the same kind. Mr. Southey remarks, in support of the credibility of this account, " With regard to the good end which they may be supposed to answer, it would be end sufficient if sometimes one of those unhappy persons who, looking through the dim glass of infidelity, see nothing beyond this life, and the narrow sphere of mortal existence, should, from the well established truth of one such story, (trifling and objectless as it might appear,) be led to a conclusion that there are more things in

heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy." But we think, that those who can resist the argument and evidence of natural and revealed religion on this subject, will be little likely to be affected by a story of this sort; if they will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

It was at the University that Wesley first distinguished himself by his religious zeal. He was powerfully affected by reading the work commonly attributed to Thomas à Kempis, *De Imitatione Christi*, and Bishop Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*. "That part in particular of this splendid work, which relates to purity of intention, affected him exceedingly. 'Instantly,' he says, 'I resolved to dedicate *all* my life to God—*all* my thoughts and words, and actions, being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that *every part* of my life (not *some* only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself,—that is in effect to the Devil.'" In this resolution he was joined by some young men, with whom he associated after he was chosen fellow of Lincoln College. They were nicknamed the *Holy* or the *Godly Club*, and consisted of John Wesley, and his brother Charles, George Whitefield, and a few others. It is a little remarkable, that those who were afterwards noted for extravagant irregularity in their manner of life, should have received a distinguishing appellation from the order and *method* with which they originally lived, "picking up, as they said, the very fragments of time, that not a moment of it might be lost."

Those, who are acquainted with Whitefield only through the traditions which are handed down of him in this country, will be surprised to learn, that in his youth he was little better than a graceless reprobate. He was the son of an inn-keeper, and used to appropriate to his own use the money which he took in the house, and what he could pilfer from his mother's pocket. He was a great devourer of romances, and at school, he even enacted a woman's part in a drama, and appeared in woman clothes. But Thomas à Kempis was the agent in his reformation also, and after perusing the work of that author, he used, in his intervals of leisure from attendance at the inn, to compose sermons. He and Wesley found each other congenial spirits at the university, and were fast running, with their companions, into extravagant fanaticism. They were peculiar in their dress, and habits of life, and so abstemious as greatly to injure their health, in consequence of which, one of their number died, and Wesley seemed likely soon to follow him to an early grave. A visit to his friends in some degree restored him, and he was urged by them to leave Oxford, and apply for the cure in which his father

had laboured for many years. But he obstinately refused, alleging that he thought he might do more good at the university. It was not long after this, however, that he thought himself called to go to America, to convert the Indians; and accordingly in Oct. 1735, he left Oxford, for Savannah. There he remained two years, and accomplished little besides making himself obnoxious to the settlers, and forming an acquaintance with some of the Moravian Brethren, which greatly furthered his progress in fanaticism. Upon his return to England he was persuaded to follow the example of Whitefield, and preach wherever and whenever he could collect an audience. He determined also not to confine himself to a form of prayer.

For several months after his return, he felt, as he expressed it, that he was "*sold under sin;* that he deserved nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations;" but the reader will learn, from the following passage, that he was born again at a quarter before nine o'cock, P. M. on the 24th of May, 1738. "On the evening of that day he went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one of the assembly was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans.—What followed is considered by his disciples as being of deep importance; it may therefore best be given in his own words:—'About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed; I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more special manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?'–How many a thought arising from that instinctive logic which is grounded on common sense, has been fathered upon the personified principle of evil! Here was a plain contradiction in terms,—an assurance which had not assured him. He returned home, and was buffetted with temptations; he cried out and they fled away; they returned again and again. 'I as often lifted up my eyes,' he says, 'and He sent me help from his holy place. And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace: but then I was sometimes, if not often conquered; now I was always conqueror.'"

If all he says of himself soon after this, be true, we think he had better have remained as he was.—"How he judged of him-

self at this time, appears by the result of a curious self-examination, in which he tried himself by the test of St. Paul: *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are past away: behold all things are become new.* 'First,' says Wesley, 'his judgments are new; his judgment of himself, of happiness, of holiness. He judges himself to be altogether fallen short of the glorious image of God; to have no good thing abiding in him, but all that is corrupt and abominable; in a word, to be wholly earthly, sensual, and devilish, a motley mixture of beast and devil. Thus, by the grace of God in Christ, I judge of myself. Therefore I am in this respect a new creature." But how completely his mind had lost its balance at this time, may be judged from the following anecdote. He was in the habit of visiting, when in London, at the house of a friend of the name of Hutton, and a few days after he had been converted, " when Mr. Hutton had finished a sermon, which he was reading on a Sunday evening to his family and his guests, John stood up, and to their utter astonishment assured them, that he had never been a Christian till within the last five days; that he was perfectly certain of this, and that the only way for them to become Christians was to believe and confess that they were not so now. Hutton, who was exceedingly surprised at such a speech, only replied, 'Have a care, Mr. Wesley, how you despise the benefits received by the two sacraments!'—But when he repeated the assertion at supper, in Mrs. Hutton's presence, she made answer with female readiness, 'If you were not a christian ever since I knew you, you was a great hypocrite, for you made us all believe you were one.' He replied, 'that when we had renounced every thing but faith, and then got into Christ, then and not till then had we any reason to believe that we were Christians.' Mr. Hutton asked him, 'If faith only was necessary to save us, why did our Saviour give us his divine sermon on the mount?'—But Wesley answered, 'that was the *letter that killeth.*' 'Hold,' said his antagonist, 'you seem not to know what you say: are our Lord's words the letter that killeth?"

" But it would have been as easy to cure a fever by reasoning with the patient, as to have made Wesley at this time doubt the soundness of his new opinions."

Soon after this he went to Germany, to visit the establishment of Moravian brethren at Hernnhut, and to dispute with Count Zinzendorf, their patron and head, on his favourite doctrine of Christian perfection. His love for the brethren began to wax cold at this visit, and a year or two afterwards he came to an open separation from them. Returning again to England, he

was instant in preaching, in season and out of season; and he now began to produce those paroxysms of bodily and mental disease, which have ever since continued to be a characteristic of his followers. At first there was some doubt felt by Wesley himself and many of his friends, whether this violent excitement were a sign of good or evil, whether it were the operation of God or of Satan. But when it was once declared to be the work of the Holy Spirit, a door was opened for every species of extravagance which this sort of mental intoxication could produce. At that time, these remarkable effects were perhaps without any parallel in the history of human nature; they have since been rivalled and illustrated by the operations of Mesmer and his pupils, the professors of Animal Magnetism, and we are now aware that strong passions affect the system as violently as strong drink, and may be as contagious as the plague or the leprosy. The volumes before us contain details of many cases of this disorder, one of the worst diseases to which human nature is liable, in some instances even destroying the understanding altogether. We know that many examples may be adduced of those who have passed through this crisis, and have ever after led lives which were an honour to their christian profession. But we ask, if there is any particular tendency to good in the paroxysm itself? Surely one might as well pretend that the excitement of animal magnetism would make men virtuous. Or is there any great good likely to result from the idea, which seems to have been entertained by Wesley, that he, who has in this manner been born again, has reached to perfection, and cannot sin because he is born of God? Rather is it not almost too obvious to be mentioned, that it is one of the most dangerous impressions that can be made upon the mind of man? Is it any answer to this, to say, that many are virtuous who are possessed of this idea, notwithstanding its tendency? We reply, that we believe *it is notwithstanding* its tendency, and that any thing but virtue is the *natural* consequence of it. So, too, we believe, that there may be good men who are Mahometans, or worshippers of Juggernaut, *notwithstanding* the grossness of their creeds. We shall perhaps be referred to the many instances on record of those who were notoriously profligate, and were made, by the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley, conscientious, religious men. To this we esteem it a sufficient reply, that the eloquence which could fill the contribution boxes with necklaces and ear rings, and empty the pockets of Franklin, not merely of coppers, but of silver and gold, may well account for all such effects likewise. It was not the peculiar doctrine, but the powerful preaching of some of the plain truths of Christianity, which wrought these

wonders; and doubtless the rare zeal, with which they taught the importance and the necessity of repentance and reformation, had a very beneficial effect upon the abandoned and profligate. But beyond this we think the tendency of the tenets both of Wesley and Whitefield decidedly pernicious.

For several years these extraordinary men united their efforts to obtain the same end, and Methodism began to be consolidated by the formation of classes, bands, and circuits; while, at the same time, the course which was taken by the leaders tended necessarily to a separation from the church of England, which they had hitherto been very desirous to avoid. About the year 1740, however, there arose a subject of dispute among themselves. Whitefield was attached to the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination, which Wesley thought it necessary to oppose. Whitefield was exceedingly anxious to avoid the controversy, probably dreading the superior skill of Wesley; and good reason he had to decline the dispute; for Wesley, though not quite equal to his friend in oratory, was much his superior in learning and in power of arguing. On this subject, however, he poured forth an overwhelming and appalling flood of eloquence as well as argument. We must make room for the following extract, the excellence of which, we think, will more than compensate for its length. After showing that the doctrine of predestination makes all preaching vain, as needless to the elect, and useless to the reprobate; that it tends to produce spiritual pride in some, and absolute despair in others; he goes on to say that it is full of blasphemy, representing the invitations of Christ as mere mockery, and the God of all grace as more cruel, false, and unjust than the devil.

"This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the *horrible decree* of Predestination. And here I fix my foot. On this I join issue with every asserter of it. You represent God as worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust. But you say, you will prove it by scripture. Hold! What will you prove by scripture? that God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. Whatever that scripture proves, it never proves this: whatever be its true meaning, it cannot mean this. Do you ask what is its true meaning then? If I say, I know not, you have gained nothing; for there are many scriptures, the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know, till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know, better it were to say it had no sense at all, than to say it had such a sense as this. It cannot mean, whatever it mean beside, that the God of truth is a liar. Let it mean what it will, it cannot mean that the Judge of all the world is unjust. No scripture can mean that God is not love, or that his mercies are not over all his works: that is, whatever it prove beside, no scripture can prove Predestination.

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"This is the blasphemy for which I abhor the doctrine of Predestination; a doctrine upon the supposition of which, if one could possibly suppose it for a moment, call it election, reprobation, or what you please, (for all comes to the same thing,) one might say to our adversary the devil, 'Thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls is as needless and useless as our preaching.—Hearest thou not that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands, and that he doth it more effectually? Thou, with all thy principalities and powers, canst only so assault that we may resist thee; but he can irresistibly destroy both body and soul in hell! Thou canst only entice; but his unchangeable decree to leave thousands of souls in death, compels them to continue in sin, till they drop into everlasting burnings. Thou temptest; he forceth us to be damned, for we cannot resist his will. Thou fool! why goest thou about any longer, seeking whom thou mayest devour? Hearest thou not that God is the devouring lion, the destroyer of souls, the murderer of men! Moloch caused only children to pass through the fire, and that fire was soon quenched; or, the corruptible body being consumed, its torments were at an end; but God, thou art told, by his eternal decree, fixed before they had done good or evil, causes not only children of a span long, but the parents also, to pass through the fire of hell; that fire which never shall be quenched; and the body which is cast thereinto, being now incorruptible and immortal, will be ever consuming and never consumed; but the smoke of their torment, because it is God's good pleasure, ascendeth up for ever.'

"Oh, how would the enemy of God and man rejoice to hear these things were so! How would he cry aloud, and spare not! How would he lift up his voice, and say, To your tents, O Israel! flee from the face of this God, or ye shall utterly perish. But whither will ye flee! Into heaven? He is there. Down to hell? He is there also. Ye cannot flee from an omnipresent, almighty tyrant. And whether ye flee or stay, I call heaven, his throne, and earth, his footstool, to witness against you: ye shall perish, ye shall die eternally! Sing, O hell, and rejoice, ye that are under the earth! for God, even the mighty God, hath spoken, and devoted to death thousands of souls, from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof. Here, O death, is thy sting! They shall not, cannot escape, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Here, O grave, is thy victory! Nations yet unborn, or ever they have done good or evil, are doomed never to see the light of life, but thou shalt gnaw upon them for ever and ever. Let all those morning stars sing together, who fell with Lucifer, son of the morning! Let all the sons of hell shout for joy; for the decree is past, and who shall annul it?

"Yes! the decree is past; and so it was before the foundation of the world. But what decree? Even this: 'I will set before the sons of men life and death, blessing and cursing;' and 'the soul that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chooseth death die.' This decree, whereby whom God 'did foreknow, he did predestinate,' was indeed from everlasting: this, whereby all who suffer Christ to

make them alive, are 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God,' now standeth fast, even as the moon, and the faithful witness in heaven; and when heaven and earth shall pass away, yet this shall not pass away, for it is as unchangeable and eternal as the being of God that gave it. This decree yields the strongest encouragement to abound in all good works, and in all holiness; and it is a well spring of joy, of happiness also, to our great and endless comfort. This is worthy of God. It is every way consistent with the perfection of his nature. It gives us the noblest view both of his justice, mercy, and truth. To this agrees the whole scope of the Christian Revelation, as well as all the parts thereof. To this Moses and all the prophets bear witness; and our blessed Lord, and all his apostles. Thus Moses, in the name of the Lord, 'I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live.' Thus Ezekiel (to cite one prophet for all,) 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear (eternally) the iniquity of the father. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' Thus our blessed Lord, 'If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink!' Thus his great apostle St. Paul, 'God commandeth all men, every where, to repent.' *All men, every where;* every man, in every place, without any exception, either of place or person. Thus St James, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him!' Thus St. Peter, 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' And thus St John, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.'

"O hear ye this, ye that forget God! ye cannot charge your death upon him. 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye.'—'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'

"A history of Wesley's life would be imperfect, unless it contained this memorable passage,—the most remarkable and the most powerful in all his works. It exasperated, beyond measure, those who, in their own conceit, had taken out their patent of election, and considered themselves, in Mr. Toplady's language, (himself one of the number,) as 'kings *incog.* travelling, disguised like pilgrims, to their dominions above.' Even temperate Calvinists were shocked, and have said, that Mr. Wesley's 'horrid appeal to all the devils in hell gave a sort of infernal tone to the controversy.'—pp. 281—284.

This "triumphant specimen of impassioned argument" caused a breach between Whitefield and Wesley, which was never entirely forgotten or repaired; and it is not to be expected that the disciples should be more charitable and forgiving than the teachers. We believe that the disagreement between the two classes of Methodists is as violent as between any other two denominations of christians. Yet, as is the case with many of those who warmly contest each others' opinions, we believe it will be found that the dispute was, in respect to some points, rather about words than things; for the man who could write thus powerfully on the pernicious notion of election and reprobation, could, at the same time, inculcate what seems to us an equally dangerous opinion; that sinless perfection is attainable in this life, by passing through the process of regeneration. He, as well as Whitefield, looked upon all the unawakened as in a state of condemnation; and we are quite unable to discover any practical or real difference between regarding one's self as elect of God by an absolute decree, and believing that we are in a state of sinless perfection. It may be said, that in the former case, there is a necessity of final perseverance, while in the latter, one may fall away from his first love. But truly we cannot see what temptation can affect him who is perfect, and the difference seems to us no greater than between being infallible, and being never in the wrong. The difference, however, such as it was, was enough to dispute about, and it resulted in an entire separation, and a genuine *odium theologicum* between the disciples of Whitefield and Wesley.

'Wesley had once a whimsical proof of the horror with which the high flying Calvinists regarded him. One afternoon, on the road from Newport Pagnel to Northampton "I overtook," says he, "a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were; therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him; he was quite uneasy to know whether I held the doctrine of the decrees as he did: but I told him, over and over, we had better keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another. And so we did for two miles, till he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer, told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him 'no, I am John Wesley himself!' Upon which,

Improvisum asperis veluti qui sentibus anguem
Pressit,

he would gladly have run away outright; but being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavoured to show him his heart, till we came into the street of Northampton.'" —p. 286.

Whitefield himself never gave into the bigotry which distinguished his followers, but was always on terms of at least decent civility with Wesley, till his death in 1770.

The Methodistic convulsions, or as they were called, *the throes of the new birth*, were not experienced at first under Whitefield's preaching, and it seems he thought they were not to be encouraged. In a little while, however, he as well as Wesley began to produce these effects. The hearers were *cut to the heart*, they were *seized with strong pangs*, and in the loose language of fanaticism, they were "constrained to roar aloud, *while the sword of the spirit was dividing asunder their souls, and spirits, and joints, and marrow.*" Though these scenes have been often repeated in this country, we hope that many of our readers have not been compelled to witness them, and we extract the following account, that they may judge of the frightful nature of what were called, and were sincerely believed to be, exhibitions of the power of God.

"Returning from Kingswood one evening, Wesley was exceedingly pressed to go back to a young woman. 'The fact,' he says, 'I nakedly relate, and leave every man to his own judgment of it. I went. She was nineteen or twenty years old, but could not write or read. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. It was a terrible sight. Anguish, horror, and despair above all description, appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing at her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured; but her stony eyes could not weep. She screamed out, as words could find their way, 'I am damned, damned; lost for ever! Six days ago you might have helped me—but it is past—I am the Devil's now—I have given myself to him—his I am—him I must serve—with him I must go to hell—I will be his—I will serve him—I will go with him to hell—I cannot be saved—I will not be saved—I must, I will, I will be damned!' She then began praying to the devil: we began, 'Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!' She immediately sunk down as asleep; but as soon as we left off, broke out again with inexpressible vehemence. 'Stony hearts, break! I am a warning to you. Break, break, poor stony hearts! Will you not break? What can be done more for stony hearts? I am damned that you may be saved! Now break, break, poor stony hearts. You need not be damned, though I must.' She then fixed her eyes on the corner of the ceiling, and said, 'There he is! aye, there he is! Come, good devil, come! Take me away! You said you would dash my brains out: come, do it quickly! I am your's—I will be your's! take me away!' We interrupted her by calling again upon God: on which she sunk down as before, and another young woman began to roar as loud as she had done. My brother now came in, it being about nine o'clock. We continued in prayer till past eleven, when

God, in a moment, spoke peace into the soul ; first, of the first-tormented, and then of the other ; and they both joined in singing praise to Him who had stilled the enemy and the avenger.'

In these words Wesley describes this hideous scene of frenzy and fanaticism, eager to proclaim it as a manifestation of his power, instead of seeking to prevent the repetition of such ravings."

Some instances occurred in which deception and collusion were pretty evident, "but suspicions of this kind," says Southey, "made little impression upon his intoxicated understanding ; the fanaticism which he had excited in others, was now re-acting upon himself." There were some cases also, which, strange as it may seem, was not a little whimsical and ludicrous. "The Methodists at Wexford, (Ireland,) met in a long barn, and used to fasten the door, because they were annoyed by a Catholic mob. Being thus excluded from the meeting, the mob became curious to know what was done there ; and taking counsel together, they agreed that a fellow should get in and secrete himself before the congregation assembled, so that he might see all that was going on, and, at a proper time, let in his companions. The adventurer could find no better means of concealment than by getting into a sack which he found there, and lying down in a situation near the entrance. The people collected, secured the door as usual, and, as usual, began their service by singing. The mob collected also, and growing impatient, called repeatedly upon their friend Patrick to open the door; but Pat happened to have a taste for music, and he liked the singing so well, that he thought, as he afterwards said, it would be a thousand pities to disturb it. And when the hymn was done, and the itinerant began to pray, in spite of all the vociferation of his comrades, he thought that, as he had been so well pleased with the singing, he would see how he liked the prayer ; but, when the prayer proceeded, "the power of God," says the relater, "did so confound him, that he roared out with might and main ; and not having the power to get out of the sack, lay bawling and screaming, to the astonishment and dismay of the congregation, who probably supposed that Satan himself was in the barn. Somebody, at last, ventured to see what was in the sack ; and helping him out, brought him up, confessing his sins, and crying for mercy. This is the most comical case of instantaneous conversion that ever was recorded, and yet the man is said to have been thorougly converted."

As Wesley grew older, these fits became less and less common, and it is to be hoped, that with the progress of information and intelligence among the people, they will become still more unfrequent, and at last be unheard of. The expectation is justified,

we think, by the conduct of this class of Christians among us, so far as our personal observation has extended. As we have already said, we look upon them as one very bad effect of this system; others are pointed out in Mr. Southey's chapter on the manners and effects of Methodism.

"The tendency to produce mock humility and spiritual pride, is one of the evil effects of Methodism. It is chargeable also with leading to bigotry, illiberal manners, confined knowledge and uncharitable superstition. In its insolent language, all unawakened persons, that is to say, all except themselves, or such graduated professors in other evangelical sects as they are pleased to admit *ad eundem*, are contemptuously styled unbelievers. Wesley could not communicate to his followers his own Catholic charity; indeed, the doctrine which he held forth was not always consistent with his own better feelings. Still less was he able to impart that winning deportment, which arose, in him, from the benignity of his disposition, and which no Jesuit ever possessed in so consummate a degree by art, as he by nature.

"In proportion as Methodism obtained ground among the educated classes, its direct effects were evil. It narrowed their views and feelings; burdened them with forms; restricted them from recreations which kept the mind in health; discouraged if it did not absolutely prohibit accomplishments that gave a grace to life; separated them from general society; substituted a sectarian in the place of a catholic spirit; and, by alienating them from the national church, weakened the strongest cement of social order, and loosened the ties whereby men are bound to their native land. It carried disunion and discord into private life, breaking up families and friendships. The sooner you weaned your affections from those who, not being awakened, were of course in the way to perdition—the sooner the sheep withdrew from the goats, the better. Upon this head the monks have not been more remorseless than the methodists. Wesley has said in one of his sermons that, how frequently parents should converse with their children when they are grown up, is to be determined by Christian prudence. 'This also,' says he, 'will determine how long it is expedient for children, if it be at their own choice, to remain with their parents. In general, if they do not fear God, you should leave them as soon as is convenient. But, wherever you are, take care (if it be in your power) that they do not want the necessaries or conveniences of life. As for all other relations, even brothers or sisters, if they are of the world, you are under no obligation to be intimate with them: you may be civil and friendly at a distance.' What infinite domestic unhappiness must this abominable spirit have occasioned!"

Against all this is to be set the good which is effected in all classes, particularly in the lower, by converting the abandoned reprobate into the conscientious, upright man; the careless bold offender against the laws of God and man, into the sincere chris-

tian and obedient citizen. On this ground we have often heard it asserted, that Methodism is an excellent system for the vulgar; that indeed it is the only one which is suited to them; and that it is best it should not be supplanted by any less gross and exciting scheme of doctrine or of preaching. But thinking, as we do, that the good effects which have been mentioned, were produced not by the peculiar doctrines, but by some of those plain and important truths which are held in common by all christians, and by the wonderful eloquence and power with which they were enforced by Wesley and Whitefield, and some of their immediate companions, we are afraid, (and experience has confirmed our suspicions) that the good effects will diminish as the preachers become less able men. We do not indeed apprehend that the zealous inculcation of the necessity of repentance and amendment, in order to attain eternal life, will ever be entirely ineffectual; but we suspect strongly, that Methodism does not now effect more reformations, than are produced by several other modifications of Christianity; and we are sure that its consequences are in some respects more pernicious. These consequences are more clearly seen, in those parts of our country where it has extended more widely, and been less checked in its operations, than in our own immediate neighbourhood. What then is to be done? Are we to encourage and support Methodism as a good religion for the poor and the ignorant? We think not. It seems to us that the extravagancies of this species of fanaticism are one call the more upon those who are rulers in the land, to provide all possible means of instructing and enlightening the mass of the population. Too much cannot be done to this end, and the more we do, the less occasion shall we have to repent, when too late, of a culpable omission.

Great and able as Wesley undoubtedly was, and great as were the effects which he produced upon the public, there were in his character some of those extraordinary inconsistences, which we sometimes find bringing men of superior talents even below the level of common minds. He was credulous and superstitious to a remarkable degree of simplicity. He was accustomed, on any emergency, to consult his bible for direction in a way for which we never heard it was given, using it as some of the early christians did, and acting as he thought himself directed, by a kind of Sortes Biblicæ.

"Whitefield was at this time urging Wesley that he would come to Bristol without delay, and keep up the sensation which had been produced there, for he himself must prepare for his return to Georgia.—These solicitations were enforced by Mr. Seward of Evesham, a young man of education and fortune, one of the most enthusiastic

and attached of Whitefield's converts. It might have been thought that Wesley, to whom all places were alike, would have hastened at the call; but he and his brother, instead of taking the matter into calm and rational consideration, had consulted the Bible upon the business, and stumbled upon uncomfortable texts. The first was, '*And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him*,' to which they added, 'not till the time was come,' that its import might correspond with the subsequent lots. Another was, '*Get thee up into this mountain, and die in the Mount, whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people.*' The next trial confirmed the impression which these had made: '*And the Children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days.*' These verses were sufficiently ominous, but worse remained behind: '*I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake*,' and pushing the trial still further, they opened upon the burial of St. Stephen the proto-martyr. 'Whether,' says Wesley in his journal, 'this was permitted only for the trial of our faith, God knoweth, and the event will show.' These unpropitious texts rendered him by no means desirous of undertaking the journey, and when it was proposed at the society in Fetterlane, Charles would scarcely bear it to be mentioned.—Yet, like a losing gamester, who, the worse he finds his fortune, is the more eagerly bent upon tempting it, he appealed again to the oracles of God, which were never designed thus to be consulted in the spirit of heathen superstition. 'He received,' says the journal, these words, as spoken to himself, and answered not again, '*Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, and yet shalt thou not mourn or weep, neither shall thy tears run down.*' However disposed the brothers might have been that he should have declined the journey without further consultation, the members of the society continued to dispute upon it, till, seeing no probability of coming to an agreement by any other means, they had recourse to sortilege; and the lot decided that Wesley should go. This being determined, they opened the Bible 'concerning the issue,' and the auguries were no better than before: '*When wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed, shall I now require his blood at your hands, and take you away from the earth?*' This was one; the final one was, '*Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem.*' There are not so many points of similitude between Bristol and Jerusalem, as between Monmouth and Macedon, and Henry the Fifth was more like Alexander than John Wesley would have acknowledged himself to resemble Ahaz; but it was clear language for an oracle. 'We dissuaded my brother,' says Charles, 'from going to Bristol, from an unaccountable fear that it would prove fatal to him. He offered himself willingly to whatever the Lord should appoint. The next day he set out, recommended by us to the grace of God. He left a blessing behind him. I desired to die with him.' 'Let me not be accounted superstitious,' says Wesley, 'if I recite the remarkable

Scriptures which offered as often as we inquired touching the consequences of this removal.' It will not be thought superfluous here to have repeated them."—vol. i. p. 214 216.

Mr. Southey has made, as our readers will have perceived by our extracts, a very entertaining as well as valuable work. He has interspersed his narrative with amusing anecdotes, and has given short and interesting memoirs of some of the most distinguished of Wesley's coadjutors. He is in general very judicious and impartial, and we should have had little to object to, could he have found it in his heart to speak somewhat less harshly of the dissenters from the church of England, and had he been a little less ready to impute to the principles of the American revolution, the blame of having produced the anarchy of France, and the disorganizing spirit which is now so troublesome in England.

ARTICLE XVI.

LOCKE's *Essay on the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles; and* LE CLERC, *on Inspiration.* Boston. Wells & Lilly. pp. 130.

THE latter of these treatises is the work of a man of acuteness and learning, such as have scarcely been surpassed, on a subject of great importance, and of such intricacy, that it may well occasion much diversity of opinion. To it is appended by the editor a very valuable exposition of the text, 2 Tim. iii. 16. The other tract, the Essay of Locke prefixed to his paraphrase of the Epistles, contains, in the space of forty-two small pages, more good sense, and furnishes more real assistance towards the understanding of those difficult writings, than are to be picked out with any amount of labour from all the English commentators before his time. Among the causes of obscurity of St. Paul's epistles, he enumerates the following; that they are in reality what they purport to be, *Letters*, containing allusions to many minute circumstances, temporary and forgotten, the knowledge of which is now only to be recovered from these letters themselves; that their phraseology is peculiar, they being composed in the Hellenistick dialect, that is, in Greek words with a mixture of Eastern idiom; that, as might be expected from the impetuous temper, and always overflowing mind of their author, their style is abrupt and involved; that in the course of argument there is a frequent change of person, without intimation being given, and objections of opponents inserted, without notice, in the body of discourse;—that it is frequently uncertain to what persons, opinions, or practices allusion is made; that each letter,

instead of being presented to the eye as one whole, is served up in our editions of the Bible, broken into chapters, and crumbled into verses ;—and that the habit of readers too often is to interpret them according to their own views of orthodoxy, or by the key which their favourite commentator offers, without sufficiently considering what was the sense which the author had, and must have had, in his mind. The simple rule for reading the Epistles proposed in this treatise is, not to read them as is commonly done, chapter by chapter, one portion one day and another the next, breaking off often in the middle of a sentence, commonly in the middle of an argument,—but as we should do with other letters, to read each "letter through from one end to the other, all at once, to see what was the main subject and tendency of it, or, if it had several views and purposes in it, not dependant one of another, nor in a subordination to one chief aim and end, to discover what those different matters were, and where the author concluded one, and began another ; and if there were any necessity of dividing the epistle into parts, to mark the boundaries." The truth of these observations and the reasonableness of this rule are so obvious, that nobody can think of disputing them, and we only wonder that we can ever have failed to practice on them. Yet to almost every reader they recommend themselves with all the interest of novelty, and ever after he reads the epistles as if with another pair of eyes. No man, in our opinion, ought to think that he understands these writings, till he has read this essay, which, in a few pages, contains in effect a tolerably complete system of biblical interpretation ; and with all sincerity we congratulate the religious public on its being put into a shape so convenient for general circulation.

ARTICLE XVII.

The Sunday School, or Village Sketches.

Behold in these what leisure hours demand,
Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.—*Comper.*

Andover, Flagg & Gould. 1820. 18mo. pp. 251.

This little book exactly answers to its title and motto. It presents to us the mode of moral discipline and teaching adopted by an excellent young man, in the instruction of a weekly and Sabbath school, with various narrations of incidents taking place amongst his pupils, and the manner in which he was accustomed from

every event to derive lessons to the children. The stories are twelve in number, well imagined and pleasantly told, sufficiently interesting to engage the attention of young readers, and conveying the best moral and religious impressions. Each story is followed by an address or sermon, supposed to be made by the teacher, for the purpose of inculcating yet more forcibly the principles and instructions, which are taught in the incidents that have been related. We think the book calculated to do good, and recommend it to parents as a pleasant and instructive volume for their children. It cannot fail of leaving good impressions on their minds. The writer deserves well of his fellow christians, and we doubt not will be gratified with finding that he has attained the object he proposed to himself, which he simply states to be, "to give interest to the sabbath reading of children." It is an important object, and we hope that parents will assist to accomplish it, by putting this book into their children's hands. It will aid them both in making the sabbath pass away pleasantly, and in fixing in their minds the great objects to which the day is devoted.

ARTICLE XVIII.

A faithful Enquiry after the ancient and original doctrine of the Trinity, taught by Christ and his Apostles. In two parts. *First, So far as is sufficient for our Salvation. Secondly, So far as may improve our* Christian Knowledge, *and establish our faith. Both which are answered in a plain and easy Manner, derived only from the word of God.* By Isaac Watts, D. D. 1745. London, D. Eaton. 1816. pp. 48.

This pamphlet is quite a curiosity, and well deserves our attention on two accounts. First, because it was printed during the life time of its distinguished author, but was suppressed, and is now reprinted from a single copy accidentally preserved. But principally, from the character of the author himself, whose latest opinions concerning a doctrine, which occupied a large space in his thoughts and writings during life, are here contained. It is not an idle curiosity which leads us to inquire what were the views respecting God, in which so sincere and devout a mind finally rested. We cannot but be edified by observing the manner in which he felt and expressed himself on a subject so deeply interesting. He is one of those to whom we have been taught to look with a sort of filial confidence and attachment. We have been accustomed to breathe out our devotions in his words from

our very childhood; as soon as we could speak we lisped praises to God in his Divine Songs; and his name has become associated with the holiest and dearest emotions of our souls. It is connected with those pure feelings of piety, which we remember to have first caught from the lips of our mothers, and with all that is solemn and impressive in the worship of God's house, where christians for a century have sung praises in the language of Watts. Few names therefore are held in more general estimation. There is nothing in his life and character, which tends at all to change the impressions which his poetry had made, and all christians agree in naming him with respect. It is not the least of his titles to praise, that he was, in the truest sense of the word, *liberal*. The few examples of a different spirit, which are to be found in his writings, are less his fault than that of the age in which he lived, and he doubtless repented of them all, like Baxter, in the close of his life, when his heart was more enlarged, and he was better acquainted with his own weakness and imperfections. But it was always his desire to keep "orthodoxy and charity united,"—which is the title of one of his works—and he has left as many examples as any man of sobriety and caution in the investigation of religious truths, and of courtesy and moderation in the treatment of errors and their advocates. Many are the passages that might be selected from his writings, which would put to the blush, by their united earnestness and mildness, the vehement and sometimes passionate declamation of controversialists not more wise and not half so good;—he is one of the few who have engaged warmly in controversy, and amid all its violence and perils have kept their piety and charity uninjured.

The doctrine of the Trinity, which has been the subject of so much disputation in times past, and concerning which we feel it a duty to say so much more—appears to have pressed with a heavy weight on his mind, and to have been a cause of no little uneasiness and perplexity to him. It evidently occupied his most serious meditations and devout prayers, interesting all the ardour of his heart, and all the fervour of his faith. To right opinions on this subject, he attached supreme importance; not regarding it as a matter of curious speculation, as it is to be feared too many view it; but as intimately connected with the religion of the soul, and deeply affecting all the religious habits of the man. Hence he never approached the subject without recollecting that the ground was holy. He wrote upon it as if trembling with reverence. Familiarity seems never to have diminished the dread which fell upon him in the contemplation of this solemn theme. He was always a stranger to the carelessness with which other

men are accustomed to treat subjects, about which they are perpetually thinking, conversing and writing. In this respect he is a model to all; and if in this christians would imitate him, avoiding even the appearance of levity and irreverence, there would be less cause for apprehension from religious controversy. We are fully sensible of the evils which may attend the frequent agitation of this subject,—that it tends to beget familiar modes of thinking and speaking of the Deity, and thus to diminish that reverence, which is essential to the maintenance of sober and constant and effective piety. This danger must have presented itself to the mind of every reflecting man. It was well expressed by the lamented Thacher,* in his Sermon on the Unity of God, (an admirable specimen of the style we recommend, however deficient in it we may sometimes be ourselves) who mentions it as an "objection to the controversy, that it unavoidably leads us to speak and think, with so much familiarity and freedom, of the existence, the nature, and the name of that awful power that made us; an idea in every form to be consecrated in our minds, and never to be connected but with our holiest thoughts, and most solemn and devout feelings." It is to be lamented that more are not aware of this evil; for as it is impossible not to discuss the question, it is of the first importance that we should guard against its putting to hazard our devout temper.

A fine illustration of the spirit and feelings of Watts in this respect may be found in his *Solemn Address to the Deity*. No one can read it without being deeply affected. It ought to be universally studied. It is printed at length in the pamphlet before us, and we wish we had room for the whole of it here. We cannot refuse place to the following specimen.

"Dear and blessed God, hadst thou been pleased, in any one plain Scripture, to have informed me, which of the different opinions about the holy *Trinity*, among the contending parties of christians, had been true, thou knowest with how much zeal, satisfaction and joy, my unbiassed heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the di-

* We take this opportunity to express our regret, in which we shall be joined by all lovers of religion, that no more memorials remain of this accomplished christian and scholar. He published little while living, and forbade his manuscripts to be printed at his death. Thus we are deprived of labours which might have enlightened and blessed the church, and perpetuated his name as long as sound sense and pure religion shall be valued in the world. We must add the expression of our regret, that a collection of his printed works has not been made, and that no one has been found to join to them the tribute which is so richly due to his life and character. We hope it is not still too late to look for so valuable a publication.

vine discovery. Hadst thou told me plainly, in any single text, that *the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are three real distinct persons in thy divine nature*, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men, instead of divine doctrine; but I should have humbly and immediately accepted thy words, so far as it was possible for me to understand them, as the only rule of my faith. Or hadst thou been pleased so to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease find out and with certainty infer this doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers, with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul.

"Thou hast taught me, Holy Father, by thy prophets, that the *way of holiness*, in the times of the gospel, or under the kingdom of the *Messiah, shall be a highway*, a plain and easy path; so *that the wayfaring man*, or a stranger, *though a fool, shall not err therein.* And thou hast called the *poor* and the ignorant, the *mean* and the *foolish things of this world*, to the knowledge of thyself, and thy son, and taught them to receive and partake of the salvation which thou hast provided. But how can such weak creatures ever take in so strange, so difficult and so abstruse a doctrine as this; in the explication and defence whereof, multitudes of men, even men of learning and piety, have lost themselves in infinite subtilties of dispute, and endless mazes of darkness? And can this strange and perplexing notion of three real persons going to make up one true God, be so necessary and so important a part of the Christian doctrine, which, in the Old Testament and the New, is represented as so plain and so easy even to the meanest understandings?"

These passages sufficiently express the awe which was upon his mind in the contemplation of this subject, and the perplexities and embarrassments with which he was exercised. To an attentive reader they will also forcibly suggest, that Dr. Watts did not really embrace the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity; for there is not only none of the positiveness, with which the advocates of this faith are accustomed to stifle every doubt, but there is actual expression of doubtful and wavering assent. The world indeed has been satisfied to rank Watts among trinitarians; and his *Hymns*, which he wrote in the early part of his life, and by which he is almost exclusively known, do in fact maintain, and more, perhaps, than any other means, maintain, this doctrine. But however strenuous he might have been in his youth, he was less positive in his later years. The doctrine sat uneasily upon him and distressed him. His hymns he repented of, and greatly desired to alter. The more zealous amongst his brethren suspected the soundness of his faith, and called him an Arian. About two years before his death, he published his opinions at large,

which, however they might admit, in some shape, of being expressed in the established form of words, certainly were very far *in meaning* from the established doctrine. It became, therefore, a matter of debate, whether he died a trinitarian or not; and the uncertainty was increased by a rumour, which gained extensive currency, that he had written a more positive renunciation of the doctrine, which his friends persuaded him to destroy.

The work to which this rumour referred, has probably at length come to light, but proves to be hardly of so decisive a character as had been anticipated. It is that which we are reviewing.

The editor's preface informs us, "there is reason to believe, that a publication of it was intended and actually attempted by its worthy author; but that in consequence of undue influence from his immediate connexions, it was entirely frustrated. In a blank leaf of the original work was written in a fair hand, the following sentence verbatim :—'The Doctor printed off only fifty copies of this work, and shewed them to some friends, who all persuaded him that it would ruin his character in his old age, for publishing such dotages, and at length he was prevailed on to burn them; so that the whole impression of fifty was destroyed without publication, except this single copy of it, which by an accident escaped the flames.'"

This copy, we are told, was found "in a bookseller's shop in Southampton, in the year 1796. The author's name, &c. together with the date, were *written* at the bottom of the title-page, as in the present impression.

"It is probable this copy had formed part of a collection of books belonging to some member of the author's family, which had recently been exposed for sale; for in a blank leaf at the beginning of a small work which was lying by it, was written (apparently in his own hand) the following presentation, *To My Dear Sister Mrs. Mary Watts.*"

The first section of the work has this title—*The doctrine of the Trinity proved to be a plain and easy doctrine.* It is very characteristic of the author, and purports to set forth that knowledge of the doctrine which may be sufficient for salvation. This knowledge he describes as having six qualifications.

1. It must be such a knowledge of this doctrine as allows a sufficient foundation for all the necessary and most important articles of the christian faith, that relate to the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. 2. Such knowledge of this doctrine must be *plain and easy* to obtain and to remember. 3. It must be a doctrine not only easy to be apprehended, but it must not be liable to many cavils. 4. It must be such a knowledge of this doctrine as is perfectly consistent with the notions and conceptions that the wisest of the heathens had gotten by the light of nature concerning the one true God, and with the ideas which the Jews had learnt of the same true God, both from reason

and Scripture. 5. It must be such a knowledge as may shew us in some sufficient measure what every one of the sacred Three hath done, and what he doth for us and towards our salvation ; and to inform us what are those respects and honours which we are bound to pay to each of the Sacred Three according to the New Testament. 6. It must be such a doctrine *as is obvious in Scripture and evidently contained there ;* if not in the most express words, yet so plainly appearing to common readers, as not to want long trains of reasoning and distant inferences to draw it out of Scripture.

In the next section the Divine Unity is assumed as unquestionable ; and in the third, it is taken for granted, that " the doctrine of the blessed Trinity is a special doctrine of the Christian religion." The object, then, is, to show, that this new doctrine of Christianity has " made no inroad" upon the ancient doctrine of the Unity. This is done by inquiring whether the sacred three be *three proper persons.*

" Those writers who call the Sacred Three by the name of *three persons*, do not assert or maintain that this very word or expression of *three persons* is found in Scripture, nor is the word *person* expressly applied to them all three.

" And though in our translation the word *person* be ascribed both to the *Father* and the *Son*, who (as we find in Scripture) are proper persons, yet none pretend that this word is so expressly applied to the *Holy Spirit*, though he be represented often in a personal manner." p. 19.

" And this is certain further, that our most orthodox divines, though they sometimes call them *proper and real persons*, yet they do not pretend to use the word *person*, in this scriptural doctrine of the Trinity, in the very same entire and complete sense as when we say, Peter, Paul and John, are three persons. A distinct person, in the full and proper sense of the word among men, must be a distinct spirit ; for a distinct person requires at least another distinct consciousness, with another distinct will, which seems to infer another different spirit. And surely the Deity is not made up of three such distinct and different spirits.

" Besides, it is sufficiently evident, that in the language of Scripture, and in the writings of the Jewish nation, those things which are not strictly and properly *persons*, are often represented in a personal manner, as *Wisdom*, Prov. ix. 1. The *Law*, Gal. iv. 21. The *Scriptures*, Gal. iii. 8. *Righteousness*, Rom. x. 6. *Love or Charity*, 1 Cor. xiii. And therefore the *Sacred Three* may be called three persons, or at least *Three Scriptural Persons*, I hope, without offence, and without entering into the tedious, learned and philosophical difficulties about the word *person :* and without enquiring or determining whether they be three real proper persons, or no ; which has created infinite disputes, and which cannot be understood, much less decided, by private Christians." p. 20.

It is clear from this passage, that Dr. Watts considered the "Sacred Three," not as *real*, but only as "*scriptural* persons:" that is, according to his own explanation in the paragraph last quoted, *figurative* persons. That is to say, the doctrine of the trinity is a figurative mode of speaking. Take away the figure, and it is nothing else than Unitarianism.

The inquiry concerning Jesus Christ, in the fifth section, is premised with the following remarkable declaration: "there is not one text which I know of, in all the Bible, wherein he is called the *Son*, only and purely relating to his Godhead, but all refer rather to his inferior nature, or his office; for Godhead cannot be generated or derived." Accordingly he does not hold by any means the sound doctrine, that Jesus is God because the *second person* in the Godhead, *the Son*, is united to the man; but because "*the Father* dwelleth in him." "This second person, this man Christ Jesus has the true Godhead united to him, or dwelling in him, in a peculiar manner; *i. e.* the man Jesus Christ is assumed by the great God into so near and intimate an union with himself, that they are often represented as one complex person, or personal agent. The man Jesus Christ is the inferior agent or medium of the great God, who acteth whatsoever he pleases in and by the man Jesus Christ." p. 24.

Here, the man Christ Jesus, and the second person, are synonymous terms. The second person is formed by the union of the Father with a human being. This certainly is not the doctrine of the Trinity, for it allows no distinction of any kind in the Godhead, which is essential to that doctrine. Indeed we do not perceive that it really differs from the simplest form of Unitarianism.

His opinions respecting the Holy Spirit are quite as distant from real orthodoxy. Indeed his section on this topic is a set argument *against* the *personality* of the Holy Spirit; that is, if there be meaning in languague, against the doctrine of the Trinity. We refer our readers, without saying a word more, to the following passages.

"The best idea that we can find, which either the ancient or modern Jews have received concerning the Spirit of God, is that of a real, almighty, operative power or principle of knowledge or action in the true Godhead; for I do not find they ever agreed to carry their ideas so far as to make him a real, distinct person in the Deity.

"Now we can hardly doubt but that the general notion of the Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, when Christ first came on earth, and which inspired Zechary and Elizabeth, Mary the mother of Christ, Simeon and Anna, and John the Baptist, Luke 1st and 2nd chap. in the beginning of the New Testament, was the same notion or idea of the Spirit, which the Jews had received from all ages by their Scriptures, and from their fathers by education and tradition.

"And 'tis most highly reasonable to believe, that our blessed Lord, who is *truth* itself, used those words of the Old Testament in the same sense in which the Jews of that day used them without reproof or blame; and that he would not impose upon them, nor on his disciples, by putting new and unknown ideas upon common and well-known words, or names, in their conversation with him.

"In order to find what is the true scriptural idea of the Holy Spirit, let it be added also, that as the Scripture makes use of the analogy or resemblance between human and divine things, to represent the Son of God to us, so does it also in representing the Spirit of God.

"Now the spirit of any thing amongst the Jews, and other Eastern nations, was the perceptive and active power or principle of that being. So the spirit of a man is the principle of knowledge and operation in man; so the spirit of a beast is the same; and the apostle Paul confirms this opinion, and establishes this analogy between things human and divine. 1 Cor. ii. 11, 'What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.'

"The Spirit of God therefore, according to this analogy, must be that all-wise, almighty, and eternal principle of consciousness and of powerful operation which is in the Godhead." p. 27, 28.

"It may be intimated here also, that the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, when it speaks of things after the Ascension of Christ, very generally or for the most part means, that power or influence of the eternal Spirit of God, which *proceedeth from the Father*, and which was communicated, or to be communicated by Christ, when he was exalted, to his followers here on earth, to confirm his gospel and to call in and secure his subjects: or it may be described thus; That divine influence which was eminently given to Christ at his ascent to heaven, to attend his gospel and bear witness to it by miracles in the first age, and by sanctifying grace and comfort ever since. 'Tis very useful to bear this idea always in mind in reading the New Testament.

"And indeed if the Holy Spirit were really a true and proper person, it would be as difficult to account for all these and many more expressions in Scripture, which cannot possibly be ascribed to a proper person; and if in some places these *impersonal expressions*, or in other places the *personal expressions*, must be figurative, why may not my explication of them do as well as the contrary? And thus the Spirit of God need NOT ANY WHERE BE CONSTRUED INTO A REAL PROPER DISTINCT PERSON." p. 30.

"Yet let it be remembered (as is said before) that even in some of these impersonal senses it may be sometimes represented as performing personal actions, according to the Hebrew idiom; as Wisdom, the Law, the Scripture, Righteousness, Sin, Death, and many other things are described as persons. So the anointing teacheth us all things, 1 John, ii. 27. 'The Spirit lusteth against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17. *i. e.* the new nature wrought by the Spirit." p. 31.

"But I know not any place of Scripture which requires us to make express personal addresses, either of prayer or of praise unto the Spirit, as we are taught to do to the Father and to the Son; nor can I find where we are required to fear him or to adore him as God, or to trust in him, or so much as to follow after the knowledge of him; but for these benefits which we receive from him, we are directed by precepts or examples in Scripture to address or pray to the Father or the son, Luke, xi. 13, Rom. xv. 13, John xv. 26, but not to the Spirit himself.

"Surely if praises or prayers were necessary to be offered distinctly to the Holy Spirit, 'tis very strange that of all the writers of the New Testament, not one of them should give us some hint of it in precept, instruction, or example; but neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, nor John, Paul, nor Peter, James, nor Jude, have left us any thing whence we can infer it.

"'Tis true I cannot think it unlawful nor utterly improper upon some occasions to say, Blessed Spirit of God, enlighten me in the knowledge of the truth: or, we give thanks to thee, O Divine Spirit, for thy holy influences: for since the Holy Spirit is true God, I think he may be adored; we may say, Blessed be God and his Spirit; as we may say, Blessed be God and his wisdom, or his power, or his grace. But I think the two plainest reasons why we are not directed to address express prayer or praise unto him, or perform divine honour to him directly, is *first*, because the greater part of Scriptures which speak of the Spirit of God mean his influences, his operations, &c. And these are not proper objects of such express addresses. And *secondly*, because whensoever the Father or the Son is addrest, the Holy Spirit, who is the conscious and active power, or Spirit of God, is also worshipped, though not in an express and distinct manner.

"It may be observed also, that though our Lord Jesus Christ is sometimes addrest by prayer in Scripture, because he is true God, yet 'tis but very seldom this is done, that so the general method of Christian worship may be maintained; that is, to make our direct addresses to God the Father by the mediation of Jesus Christ his Son, and by the aids of the Holy Spirit, Ephes. ii. 18." p. 32, 33.

All this we conceive to be most obviously and unequivocally opposed to all correct faith in the orthodox trinity. His mode of answering "objections about these representations of the Holy Spirit," is a still further proof of this.

"There are many Christians indeed, who cannot suppose that several texts of Scripture can be explained by the Spirit of God, considered as an essential power or principle in the Godhead, because the Spirit of God is always represented as ministering to God the Father, or to Jesus Christ, as sent by both the Father and the Son, on all his messages, and seems to be distinguished from them as another person in the Form of Baptism, and in 1 John v. 7, where Three bear record in heaven, and in other Scriptures.

"But we must remember, that not only the Hebrew tongue, but almost all languages represent many things in a personal manner, which are not real persons: such as Life, Death, Virtue, Time, Fate, Nature, Providence, Conscience, Appetite, &c. And we may say, God and his Spirit, as well as we may say God and his Providence, God and nature, do this or that.

"'Tis objected also, that the Spirit of God is sometimes represented in a lower character, as a mere messenger, John xvi. 13, 'When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak,' &c.

"But we should consider, that though the Spirit of God itself, or the divine principle of knowledge and power in Godhead, cannot be so properly represented in a lower character, yet the influences and operations, the gifts or effects, of the Spirit of God, which are often called the Spirit, may be said to be sent, conveyed, or bestowed upon men; and that even not only by God the Father, or by Jesus Christ, but also by the hands of the apostles. Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit, Acts viii. 17." p. 35.

Such are the contents of this pamphlet. We apprehend that the sentiments advanced and defended in it, do not materially, if at all, differ from those which he had publicly given to the world before his death, and which are generally attributed to him under the title of "the indwelling scheme." But though there should perchance be found any shades of difference, we are certain that they are very small; and that his former writings, as well as this posthumous pamphlet, afford no sufficient pretence for classing him amongst trinitarians. He indeed loved and used their phraseology; he had been educated in it, there were holy associations with it in his mind, and he could not bear to give it up. But no one can glance an eye over the passages we have quoted above, without being convinced beyond question, that he affixed to it a signification altogether foreign from its obvious meaning, and totally irreconcilable to it. In words he confessed it, but his heart was far from it.

It may be thought, perhaps, a matter of small consequence what the opinions were of Dr. Watts, or of any man who lived a century ago; and that it is scarcely worth while to enter into an inquiry concerning them. In regard to most men it would be so. But in regard to a man universally known, respected and appealed to; upon whom the majority of Christians look as the standard of faith, and whose poetical writings exert an influence over the minds and hearts of believers, great beyond all calculation; we esteem it right and proper to step in and see whether there be any mistake or not. We hold that it is improper and unjust

to regard him as the champion of a faith, which, in his ripest and latest years, he did not maintain ; and it is time that we should cease to propagate, under cover of his early writings, and beneath the sanction of his venerated name, a sentiment, which he has, with great solemnity, virtually disavowed.

But enough of this. There is another thought suggested by the work before us, to which for one moment we must beg the attention of our readers.

Nothing can be plainer than what is taught us from this example of Watts, and others similar to it; that the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of words and phraseology alone. The contention is not, on the part of its advocates, so much for a certain opinion, as for a certain form of language. He that adheres to this language, is accounted to be sound in the faith ; he that abandons this language, has departed from the faith. This is no random assertion, but a plain and demonstrable matter of fact ; and it constitutes, in our view, one of the most deplorable features of the system. It is well known, that there is as little community of belief amongst those who contend for this creed, as between almost any classes of believers. The variety of interpretations given to these words, is almost endless. And yet every one who takes the words, in whatever sense, is considered and treated as a true believer ; while every one who rejects these words, is, for that simple and single reason, considered and treated as a heretic. Dr. Watts was able to abide by the language in which he had been educated, and has been suffered quietly to retain his reputation and influence ; while many others, not perhaps differing at all in sentiment from him, have yet been branded with obloquy, because they departed from the prescribed mode of speech. Such is trinitarianism : it is built upon, it consists in, words ; and every man who will repeat the words, construe them as he may, is sound in this article of faith.

This appears to us a most important view of the subject ; for if it be thus—as every man of reading and observation must know that it is—it is an unsettled, loose, indefinite system, pretending to great exactness and precision, yet neglecting the sense in an unworthy adherence to words ; and therefore we are fully justified in opposing all attempts to force it upon us and our fellow christians, and in repelling the imputations cast upon the character of those, who care more for the sentiment of their creed, than for the language in which it is stated.— Nay, we must be permitted to say, that we think the whole history of man does not afford a more lamentable instance of weakness, to say no-

thing harsher, than the pains which have been taken to overwhelm with suspicion and obloquy, all who cannot assent to the prescribed form of words; while at the same time, confidence and reputation are permitted to follow those who do, even when they accompany them with an heretical interpretation. The excellent Watts himself, if his strong attachment to old forms had suffered him to depart from the language as well as the sentiment in which he was educated, would have been proscribed in the church and his name blackened; but as he only departed from the sentiment, he has been still permitted to wear his honours.

The truth of all this might be abundantly established by appeal to facts. We are glad to have had an opportunity to support it by the example of so eminent a man, who needed only to have lived a few years longer or half a century later, to have found that this embarrassing doctrine was not a first principle of revelation, and therefore, that its peculiar phraseology might be safely departed from, as well as its signification explained away.

ARTICLE XIX.

1. *Advice to the Teens; or Practical Helps towards the formation of one's own character.*
2. *Self-Cultivation recommended; or, Hints to a Youth leaving School.*
3. *Character essential to Success in Life: Addressed to those who are approaching Manhood.* By Isaac Taylor, Minister of the Gospel at Ongar. Boston, published by Wells & Lilly. 1820.

The name of Taylor, although it does not stand so high as some others in the same department, is yet one which should be mentioned with great respect and gratitude, for judicious and well meant endeavours to promote in the young a love of knowledge and of virtue. Several members of the family are authors, and have written for the improvement of the young; and in this age, which has been so much distinguished for attention to the subject of education, their works have a claim to be ranked among the most useful and sensible. The wife of our author has attempted to impress and instruct through the medium of fictitious narrative, and published that pleasant and good tale, *Duty, or the White Cottage.* In the same line his daughter gave to the world *Display, a tale for young people*—one of the most unexceptionable and useful religious stories. Mrs. Taylor is also the author of *Practical Hints to young females, on the duties of Wife,*

and Mother, which has had an extensive circulation amongst us, and with whose merits many of our readers are acquainted. The father of the family is now, we understand, an aged minister at Ongar in England, who devotes the leisure of his old age to the amusement of engraving, and of writing books for the instruction of the young. These books have been republished here, and deserved to be republished. It is gratifying to learn that their merit has been appreciated by the public, and that they are taken into quick circulation. They are full of the finest thoughts and best sentiments, rich in the counsels of experience, inspired with the wisdom of religion, and, notwithstanding their infelicity of style, by which they may possibly be rendered less attractive than they otherwise might be, must be considered as a valuable gift to those who are just entering life. They form together part of a system, each being in a manner the continuation of the preceding. And that young person who shall consent to adopt the principles and obey the maxims here laid down, shall study and follow the counsels here given, will lay for himself a sure foundation of respectability, honour, virtue, and happiness, and—if faithful unto death—a crown of life.

INTELLIGENCE.

Massachusetts Peace Society.—The annual choice of the officers of this Institution took place on the 12th of December. His Hon. William Phillips was rechosen President; Hon. Thomas Dawes, V. President; Rev. Dr. Harris, Rec. Secretary; Rev. Dr. N. Worcester, Corresponding Sec.; and Rev. Dr. Foster, Assistant Cor. Sec.; and Elisha Ticknor, Esq. Treasurer.—The anniversary services of the society were celebrated in the Old South Church, on the evening of Dec. 25th, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, in presence of a crowded and gratified assembly. After prayers by the Rev. Mr. Sharp, an oration was delivered by the Hon. Josiah Quincy, on the objects and prospects of the society, in which he illustrated in a strain of argumentative and impassioned eloquence rarely excelled, the various circumstances in the history and progress of the world, which give encouragement to the friends of peace to believe that they shall not labour in vain. We would give a sketch of his reasoning and illustrations, if we did not suppose that the oration would be soon published. A collection was taken to assist in defraying the expenses of the society. The services were interspersed with anthems sung in a superior style of performance, and the assembly departed highly animated and gratified. We present the following extracts from

The Fifth Annual Report.—In the course of the year there have been distributed, in behalf of the Society and its Auxiliaries:—

Of the various Nos. of the Friend of Peace,	7155
Of the several smaller Tracts,	8935
In all,	16080
In addition to these, there have been sold of the Friend of Peace,	2860
Increasing the aggregate disposed of, to	18,940

It is also proper to state, that two valuable Addresses have been published by Branch Societies—one by Hingham Branch, delivered by the Rev. Daniel Kimball; the other by East Haddam Branch, delivered by the Rev. Solomon Blackslee.

In making the distributions, the Committee have sent upwards of 500 copies of the Friend of Peace, and many smaller Tracts, to foreign states and countries;—to the four British provinces in America—to Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, in Europe. and to Calcutta and Ceylon, in Asia. The other distributions have extended to the greater number of the United States.

In regard to the influence of these Tracts, and the manner in which they have been received, it may be sufficient to give an extract from a recent Report of the Raleigh Peace Society, in which it is said—"All who had an opportunity of reading them, seemed to feel the importance of the subject. None, we venture to say, have attempted a refutation of the doctrines or principles therein contained. Aged ministers of the gospel expressed their astonishment and regret, that they had never before viewed the matter in its true light. Others declared that they had often been impressed with such sentiments, but so indistinct, and so various from sentiments that are generally deemed patriotic, that they never ventured to express them."

Of this extract the committee will only observe, that similar effects have occurred in many other parts of the country;—and that these being duly multiplied and extended, cannot fail to excite a universal abhorrence of war.

Since our last Anniversary three new Auxiliaries have been reported—Byfield, Boxford, and Andover—and a report of one at Sacket's Harbour, is daily expected.* The East Haddam and Billerica Branches, have been greatly enlarged; other Branches have received some additions, and many members have been added to the original Society. In all societies, the individuals are liable to pecuniary embarrassments, and to death. It is not possible for the Committee to state the precise number of members at the present time; but, including the fifteen Auxiliaries, it is supposed that the present number of members exceeds one thousand.

Two of the early members of this society have in the course of the year become Life Subscribers—Jonathan Thompson, Esq. of Natchez, in Mississippi, has also presented a Life Subscription; and J. N. Mooyaart, Esq. of Ceylon, in India, has presented a donation of twenty dollars, in addition to his former donation of twenty-five. The value of Mr. Mooyaart's donation in Tracts, was delivered to the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to be forwarded to India, that the cause of the Society might be promoted in that quarter of the world. The Reports which have been received from the independent Societies in this country, afford evidence that the cause of peace is advancing in Maine, Rhode Island, New-York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Indiana.

* An Association has also been formed at Stanstead, (L. C.) on the plan proposed for Reading Peace Societies; and Tracts have been procured for the same purpose by a gentleman of Shirley in this state.

The Committee have received no accounts from the Societies in Britain, of later date than the Herald of Peace, for March, 1820. At that period, the principal Society in London, had been greatly strengthened by the addition of many subscribers, and several important Auxiliary Societies. Besides having published more than 150,000 Tracts in their own language, they had caused 5000 copies of the Solemn Review to be published in Germany; 5000 copies of another Tract in the Dutch language, were in the press, for Holland and its colonies; arrangements were making for publishing in the Welsh language; and one hundred pounds sterling had been granted to promote the objects of the Society in France. These facts may dispel all fears that the Peace Societies in this country are too rapid in their advances for the public safety.

Since the Society was formed, it has increased in a ratio greater than that of doubling its number annually. Were it to advance in the same ratio for ten years to come, it would contain more members than there were free adults in the United States during the time of the revolution. Though such advances in future are not to be expected, it is reasonable to anticipate an increase of Peace Societies, and Peace characters, both in this country and in Great Britain, which will have a favourable influence on the policy of the two nations, and on the destinies of the world.

Landing of the Fathers.—The TWO HUNDREDTH anniversary since the landing of the fathers of New-England, occurred on the 22d day of Dec. The day was celebrated by religious services in many churches throughout the country, and by the sons of New-England in distant cities. At Plymouth there was a great and glad festival. The town was crowded with visitors from every part of the land, and the day spent in the most animated expressions of gratitude and joy. Religious services were performed in the meeting house, and an impressive and powerful oration delivered by the Hon. Daniel Webster. "The feelings excited in the minds of all, by the combined solemnities and rejoicings of the occasion, were those of enthusiasm for the character of our fathers, veneration for their exalted virtues, tender recollection of their trials and hardships, and heartfelt gratitude to Divine Providence for his goodness to them and their children."

In New-York, this festival was celebrated by the *New England Society*, at whose request the Rev. Dr. Spring delivered a Sermon; in which he took occasion to give account of the state of religion and morality in Boston. He said, "in many of the churches in Massachusetts, and particularly in the metropolis of New-England, the glory of the gospel had departed, a religion laid on other foundations than the bible had taken place of the sound and pure faith of their forefathers: The Sabbath was profaned, family religion almost entirely neglected, and vice and immorality prevailed,"—and not content with this, to make it still more pointed, he went on to ask, "What would have been the condition of New England now, if the Pilgrims, instead of being pious *Christians*, had been Infidels, or Jews, or Catholics, or Arians, or Socinians?" These have been given to us by a correspondent, as the words of the preacher, as nearly as can be recollected.

We have been so accustomed to hearing language of this sort, that it occasions no surprise. It is no novelty to be excluded the company of 'pious christians,' and to be classed with 'Jews and Infidels.' But we should hardly have expected that a reverend divine would have chosen the opportunity of so solemn and joyful a festival, to wound the feelings and insult the faith of a large number of the members of that society at whose request he was speaking, especially that he could hope to be believed in intimating what he knew to be untrue, that vice and immorality are more prevalent in this than in more orthodox cities.

Religion in Otaheite.—We copy from the London Evangelical Magazine, the following interesting particulars, respecting the progress of Christianity in this Island They are extracted from a letter of the missionaries.

"The king Pomare has lately erected a large and very long building at Papaoa, in the district of Pare, and devoted it to the meetings of the missionary society, which was formed among the Tahitians last year. This building we denominate The Royal Mission Chapel, the dimensions of which are as follows; it is 712 feet long by 54 wide. The ridge pole, or middle, is supported by 36 massy pillars of the bread-fruit tree. The outside posts all around the house are 280. It has 133 windows with sliding shutters, and 29 doors; the ends are of a semi-circular form. There are three square pulpits, about 260 feet apart from each other, and the extreme ones about 100 feet from the ends of the house. It is filled with forms, except an area before each pulpit, and laid with dry grass. The rafters are covered with a fine kind of fringed matting, which is bound on with cords of various colours in a very neat manner; and the ends of the matting are left hanging down, like the naval and military flags in St. Paul's Cathedral. The whole building is surrounded with a very strong fence of wood, and the space between it and the building is filled with gravel.

"Pomare has lately expressed an earnest desire for baptism, engaging to devote himself to the Lord, and to put away every sin, and every appearance of evil. He has had conferences with some of the brethren on the subject; and has also written to us expressing a deep sense of his sinfulness and unworthiness, a firm dependence upon the blood of Christ for pardon, and an earnest desire to give himself to the Lord in baptism. As it appeared to be the voice of the nation, and particularly of the most pious chiefs, and as his conduct has been so constant in teaching and promoting religion, we resolved to baptize him. The baptism was fixed for Lord's Day, 16th inst.

"Tuesday was the day appointed for opening the Royal Mission Chapel. —About 11 o'clock we met the king at the east end of the house. He was dressed in a white shirt, with a neat variegated mat around his loins, and a tiputa over all, coloured and ornamented with red and yellow. The Queen and principal women were dressed in native clothing, with an English frill around the neck. The assembled thousands were clean, and dressed in their best. We took our station according to appointment. Brother Platt in the west pulpit, brother Darling in the middle, and brother Crook in the east. The king sat in the east end of the house. Brother Bourne, from the middle pulpit commenced the service, by giving out Hymn the third, in our Tahitian collection, with a very shrill penetrating voice, which was heard from one end of the house to the other. The whole congregation stood up and sung. Each preacher then read Luke xiv. and prayed. The sermons commenced about the same time, brother Darling's text was Isa. lvi. 7. *I will make them joyful in my house of prayer;* &c. brother Platt's text, Luke xiv. 22. *And yet there is room;* and brother Crook's, Exod. xx. 24. *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.* The sermons being ended much about the same time, all the congregation sung again, and the whole was concluded with prayer. The scene was striking beyond description; no confusion ensued from three speakers preaching all at once in the same house, they being at such a great distance from each other.

"Thursday was the day appointed for promulgating the laws. About noon we all assembled in the centre of the Royal Mission Chapel. The king requested brother Crook to open the business of the day. He as-

cended the pulpit, and Pomare followed. After singing, reading the scriptures, and prayer, the king stood up, and looked upon the thousands of his subjects on his right hand and his left. Addressing himself to Tati, the pious chief of the southern part of the Island, he said, 'Tati, what is your desire? what can I do for you?' Tati, who sat nearly opposite the pulpit, arose and said, 'Those are what we want—the papers you hold in your hand—the laws; give them to us, that we may have them in our hands, that we may regard them, and do what is right.' The king then addressed himself to Utami, the good chief of the Teoropaa, and in an affectionate manner, said, 'Utami, and what is your desire?' He replied, 'One thing only is desired by us all, that which Tati has expressed—the laws, which you hold in your hand.' The king then addressed Arahu, the chief of Eimeo, and Veve, the chief of Taiarabu, nearly in the same manner, and they replied as the others had done. Pomare then proceeded to read and comment upon the laws respecting murder, theft, trespass, stolen property, lost property, sabbath breaking, rebellion, marriage, adultery, the judges, court houses, &c. in eighteen articles. After reading and explaining the several articles, he asked the chiefs if they approved of them? They replied aloud, 'We agree to them—we heartily agree to them.' The king then addressed the people, and desired them, if they approved of the laws, to signify the same by lifting up their right hands. This was unanimously done, with a remarkable rushing noise, owing to the thousands of arms being lifted at once. When Pomare came to the article on rebellion, stirring up war, &c. he seemed inclined to pass it over, but after a while proceeded. At the conclusion of that article, Tati was not contented with signifying his approbation in the usual way only, but standing up, he called in a spirited manner, to all his people to lift up their hands again, even both hands, he setting the example, which was universally followed. Thus all the articles were passed and approved. Brother Henry concluded the meeting with a short address, prayer and blessing. This interesting scene may be better conceived than described; to see a king giving laws to his people with a regard to the authority of the word of God, and the people receiving the same with such universal satisfaction, was a subject very affecting to us all."

Ordination.—On Tuesday, Nov. 14, Mr. John Brazer, late Professor of Latin, in Harvard College, was ordained to the pastoral care of the North Church in Salem. Introductory Prayer, by Rev. J. Bartlett of Marblehead; Sermon, by the Rev President Kirkland, from 2 Thessalonians, ii. 11, 12. Ordaining Prayer by Rev. Mr. Abbot of Beverly; Charge by Rev. Dr. Bancroft of Worcester; Fellowship of the Churches, by Rev. Dr. Prince of Salem; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Ware of Boston.

The Clergyman's Almanack.—We recommend this Almanack to the patronage of our readers. Its editor has laboured for many years to make it worthy the attention of religious families, and we think he deserves encouragement from all religious people; especially since pains have been taken to prejudice the public against it, and prevent its circulation.

OBITUARY.

Died, on Sunday morning, Dec. 24, after a short, but severe illness, JOHN GALLISON, Esq. Counsellor at Law, aged 32.

In the death of this most estimable man, not only his friends and professional associates, but the whole community have sustained a severe loss. His character, wherever it could be known, inspired respect, and within the circle of friendship, the tenderest affection. We perhaps should not claim for him the highest attributes of genius, or any unusual vigour or originality of intellect, but he possessed what is generally more valuable —excellent talents, faithfully improved, a sound judgment, inviolable rectitude, scrupulous adherence to duty, singleness of purpose, kind and unobtrusive manners, and a most benevolent heart Those, who were conversant with him in the walks of his profession, bear testimony to the extent and accuracy of his learning, to his patient, laborious investigation, to his conscientious fulfilment of every trust, to the honourable principles, by which he was actuated; and in the evidence he was daily giving of his industry, his fidelity and skill, they were already anticipating for him the highest rank and honours of his profession. Indeed the character and talents of Mr. Gallison were precisely such, as in our community create the highest confidence. There was in him an unusual freedom from prejudice and passion, mingled with unaffected modesty. He never claimed what would not be cordially yielded to him, and he generously granted to all their due.

We might speak of his public spirit; the interest he expressed for all that concerns our literary and political improvement. But it is chiefly to the religious character of our lamented friend that we would invite attention. He was in its most exalted sense, *a good man.* Purity of thought and principle, a deep sense of moral obligation, a devout reverence of religion, and a sincere humble piety, were conspicuous in him; and much as we honour his talents and professional attainments, we do not hesitate to say, that it was his *goodness*, which gave him his noblest distinction. We saw in him, what power there is in virtue to improve and exalt the intellect, and to make learning a blessing. He had given to the subjects of christianity an attentive investigation; and the result was a firm conviction of its truth. He embraced the gospel of his Saviour in its simplicity, convinced of its spiritual, practical nature, and utterly disclaiming all authority or impositions of man. He exhibited the fruits of religion in his exact discharge of its duties, in his pure, humble, and benevolent life. He was particularly a punctual attendant on public worship, expressing a lively interest in the prosperity of the religious society,* of which he was a most valuable member; and was frequently found, during the intermission of the Lord's day, instructing the young children of the school, in the simple truths and duties of religion. And though nothing was farther from his taste and feelings than ostentation, it might be seen in his professional labours, and in his most familiar intercourse, that he was habitually guided by the holiest motives.

In his death, sudden, untimely, as it seems, God has taught us once more the utter uncertainty of the fairest and the purest earthly hopes. For ourselves, we could have wished he might have been spared, for in such a life we see the path to glory and to virtue. He was one whom the aged and the young could alike applaud; whom none could envy, because religion sanctified all his success; and whom all can imitate, because virtue was his brightest glory. He has bequeathed to us the light and encouragement of his example; and may the God, who has thus early crowned him with immortality, help us, who remain, to be followers of him as he was a follower of Christ.

* Rev. Dr. Channing's in Federal Street.

☞ *For notice to Correspondents, see second page of the cover.*